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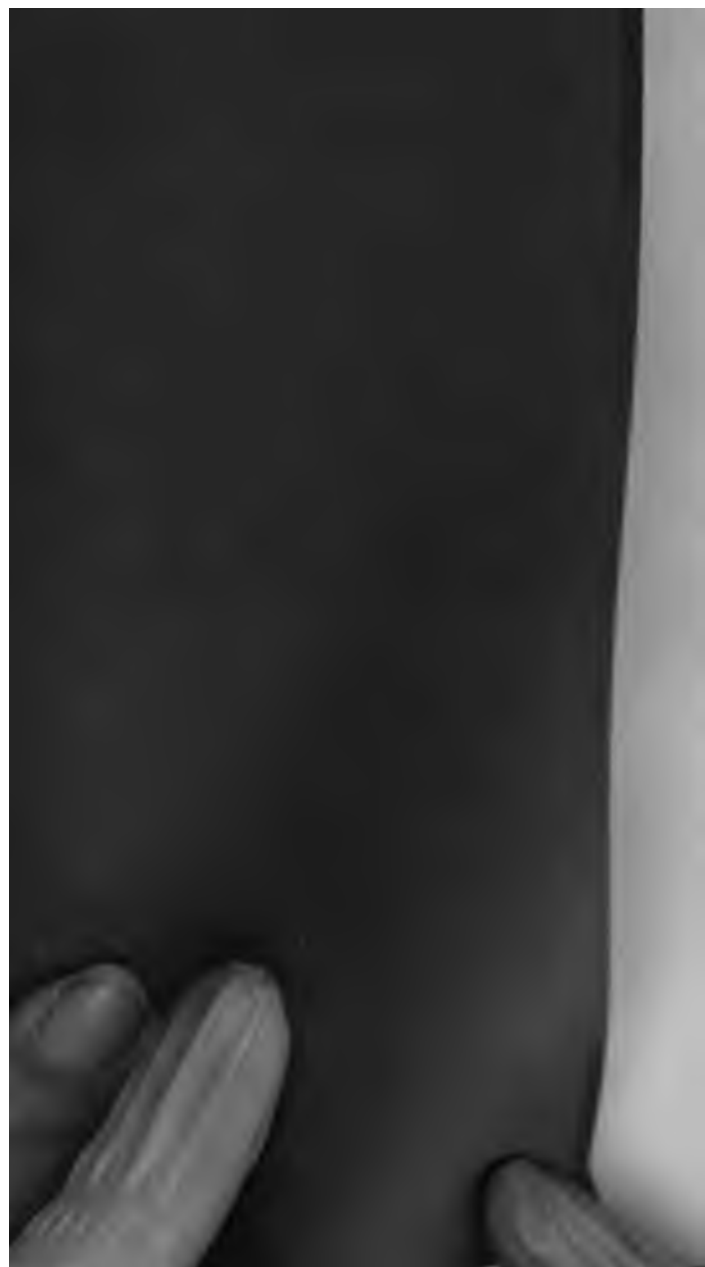
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THE
PROFLIGATE MOTHER,
&c. &c.

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&c. &c.



THE
PROFLIGATE MOTHER;

OR,

The Fatal Cabinet.

BY MISS H——.

VOL. I.



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THE
PROFLIGATE MOTHER,
&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

IN the north of England long had lived a family highly respectable in its descent; and whose affluent circumstances ensured them every luxury and comfort the world could bestow. The doors of hospitality were opened with a liberal welcome, and the master's generous spirit was conspicuous in every domestic arrangement.— Henry Grosvenor, the son and heir of a man so respected and beloved, became in due time the possessor of a noble and improving estate, and of course inherited all the wealth of his lamented father.— He married a woman, whose beauty was

her chief recommendation ; he had long admired the blooming graces of her person, nor till too late did he discover the deficiencies of her head and heart. Formed by nature for the endearing comforts of domestic life, and disappointed of the fair prospects which the romance of a youthful imagination had pourtrayed, he at first yielded to all the whims and caprices of a young and beautiful wife ; he indulged her in frequent visits to London, where she enjoyed without restraint all the gaiety of fashionable dissipation. The birth of a daughter he naturally hoped would have led her mind to more domestic pursuits and occupations ; he regretted that a son and heir had not gratified his anxious wishes, but he was doomed to repeated disappointments. Another child was never born alive, greatly owing to the imprudence of his thoughtless wife ; and the constant reflection that he might have been the happy father of a blooming

boy, contributed to estrange his regard from his still lovely, but volatile companion ; and he often sought relief from domestic grievances in the midnight revels of unthinking dissipation. Mrs. Grosvenor, instead of endeavouring to recall him to the path of reason, rendered home a continual scene of misery, by imprudent reproaches, or absurd lamentations. Repeated altercations blunted the edge of affection, and except when her husband was surrounded by company, the smile of satisfaction was banished from his countenance, and his whole character seemed to have undergone a fatal alteration. The playful graces of his little girl sometimes yielded him a momentary interest and amusement, for she grew healthy and beautiful, notwithstanding the neglect which she experienced from her mother ; and Mr. Grosvenor could not sometimes avoid seriously reflecting on the injustice he was guilty of, in permitting the mind

of his child to remain so long uncultivated. Her mother either treated her with unlimited indulgence or undue severity ; for moderation never marked the limits of Mrs. Grosvenor's conduct.

At length Mr. Grosvenor's health began to decline ; a fall from his horse, when riding home from a convivial party, seemed to have fixed some alarming complaints, and his constitution appeared to be injured by bodily infirmity and mental uneasiness. The child now more seriously engaged his attention ; he resolved and speedily executed a plan which had only before been casually thought of. He immediately placed her under the tuition of a gentlewoman, who was born to better prospects, and who, to ensure to herself independence and comfort, took a limited number of pupils, to whose education and morals she did ample justice ; and when Emily Grosvenor had attained her fourteenth year, the improvement of her mind

was truly gratifying to her father; and every vacation had taught him what an interesting object she was becoming to his heart. Mrs. Grosvenor, possessing no affections beyond what self-interest called forth, met and parted with her daughter with perfect indifference; and as Emily was very little and delicate of her age, she hoped that school would be her abode for some years to come.

Mr. Grosvenor's complaints alarmingly increased; indisposition made him irritable, and he never could suppress his regret that heaven had not blessed him with a son, as the estate so long in lineal descent would become, at his death, the property of a very distant relation. Still he intended to provide affluently for his wife and child, and wished to be just in the distribution of his fortune; but procrastinated (as he termed it) the mournful employment of making his will. The physicians recommended a change of cli-

mate ; Mrs. Grosvenor seconded the idea, for to her restless and vacant mind any thing was preferable to the dull monotony of domestic life. Rendered more melancholy, from the state of her husband's health, she hoped that Emily would never be left independent of her : it suited, therefore, her future plans, to appear affected at Mr. Grosvenor's illness, and, by every attention in her power, endeavour to counteract the unfavourable impressions her former conduct must have made upon his mind.

Mr. Grosvenor often attempted to laugh at the anxiety of his friends, and the prescriptions of his medical attendants, but he at last consented to try the effects of a more genial climate ; and, when every thing was arranged for his departure, Emily was sent for home to take leave of her parents, her father wisely determining to leave her under the care of the amiable woman she had been placed with.

Mrs. Grosvenor, who always had tears at her command, wept upon the bosom of her daughter, and lamented with clamorous sorrow that their parting was inevitable.

Mr. Grosvenor's feelings evaporated not in words; exhortation died upon his lips, and he gave and received in mournful silence the oft repeated and parting embrace. His health remained so fluctuating, that he was absent two years, and then expired, as he imagined, in the arms of a repentant wife. She had succeeded by her art and blandishments in every wish; his last will was made as she directed; Emily was left dependent on her mother! the imbecility of Mr. Grosvenor's mind during the last months of his life, and the specious arguments of his wife, had caused this act of folly and injustice; and, from some reasons which may hereafter be developed, she remained abroad six months after the death of her husband. Poor Emily had written frequently to her

with all the affection of a daughter ; but young as she was, she did not feel quite satisfied with her mother's laconic answers. Still, as hope and expectation ever agitate the elastic mind of youth, she pursued her studies with avidity, and looked forward to her mother's return to England with impatient anxiety.

At length the expected period arrived. An elegant house, and all things appropriate, were in readiness for the reception of the widow. Her doors were soon opened to the gay and inconsiderate, and the lovely Mrs. Grosvenor became an object of attention in the circle of fashionable life. The most studied dress, which the slightest mourning could authorise, contributed to set off the remains of that beauty which it had ever been her study to preserve ; and as her fortune was reputed to be affluent, she was flattered and caressed by all. Among the candidates for her favour, Sir George

Sinclair was pre-eminently distinguished : with a dissipated mind and ruined fortune, he was in constant debate with himself, whether Mrs. Grosvenor's money would compensate for being encumbered with her person. . He, therefore, contrived to keep her in suspense and uneasiness on the subject ; sometimes playing the lover to perfection, and sometimes regarding her with total indifference.

Mrs. Grosvenor had invited a distant relation to live with her ; the motives which dictated the invitation were neither the wish for her society, nor the hope of adding to her comfort. The true spirit of liberality was a stranger to Mrs. Grosvenor's bosom ; self was the goddess of her idolatry, and the weakness of intellect was only counteracted by the despicable artifices of vanity and cunning. She detested any occupation which brought with it care or trouble ; she knew that a family required regulation and management ;

that Emily must ere long become an inmate of her house, and she calculated that this female relation could manage her domestic concerns, and be useful in the general care of her expected child, as she always affected to call her absent daughter.

Maria Sandford soon became the convenient cousin and the humble friend, never presuming to discover any folly or imprudence in Mrs. Grosvenor's uncertain conduct.

Sir George Sinclair continued his usual behaviour—to be Lady Sinclair suited Mrs. Grosvenor's ambition ; and she sometimes seriously thought of requesting an explanation of his sentiments ; but she dreaded the result of such an enquiry, and contented herself with giving him every possible encouragement.

She intended to keep Emily at school for some time longer ; but the following letter, given to her at the moment of an

interesting tête-a-tête with Sir George Sinclair, deranged her ideal plans, and obliged her to receive Emily without delay.

To Mrs. Grosvenor.

“ Madam,

“ An unexpected event obliges me to decline my present occupation. I am under the necessity of requesting you to receive Miss Grosvenor immediately, as I am compelled to leave England as soon as possible.—I sincerely hope and believe I have performed the duty so long entrusted to me. Your daughter is highly gifted by nature, which has rendered my task easy, and her’s not unpleasant. Gentleness will guide her to all that is amiable and good ; and that she may ever prove a blessing to you, and an ornament to society, is the sincere wish of,

“ Madam,

“ Your respectful

“ and obedient servant,

“ JANE MASON.”

Mrs. Grosvenor read the letter with great perturbation, and tossing it upon the table, manifested so much chagrin and displeasure, that Sir George Sinclair, being in one of his tender moods, entreated to be made acquainted with the cause of her uneasiness.

Mrs. Grosvenor, wishing to appear in an amiable light, instantly assumed the tone of affection, begging him to excuse her emotions; but the idea of clasping a child to her bosom, whom she had not seen for two long years, was almost too much for her agitated spirits: "for Emily's advantage," she said, "she had deprived herself of every maternal comfort;" and thus continued in so overacted a strain, that Sir George could hardly suppress the smile of incredulity; and coolly requested to know the age of her little girl.

When Mrs. Grosvenor parted with Emily she was in her fourteenth year, but so

delicate in her appearance, that she was seldom thought more than ten years of age, probably forgetting, or wishing to forget, the alteration two years might have made in Emily's person ; she acknowledged the child was then in her fourteenth year ; and proceeded to reprobate the indiscretion of some mothers, who introduced babies into scenes of gaiety and dissipation. The entrance of company interrupted this hypocritical harangue ; and Sir George Sinclair felt more undecided than ever what line of conduct to pursue. Mrs. Grosvenor wrote to the governess, and all things were prepared for the reception of a girl of thirteen years old. On the day fixed for Emily's arrival, Mrs. Grosvenor and Maria were particularly engaged from home ; but the mother, wisely considering that a child, after a long fatiguing journey, would be glad to seek repose, fulfilled her own engagements, and left orders with the maid who was hired to at-

tend on Emily, to persuade her to go to bed immediately on her arrival, without any conciliating affectionate excuse for not being herself at home to receive her. Emily's sorrow in parting with her kind friend and young companions, soon yielded to the throbbing anxiety of her heart, at the idea of meeting her only parent, for long had she mourned the death of a father---long had she remembered their eventful parting: she now, with all the enthusiasm of youth, painted the scene she must go through, and even pictured to herself the flowing robes of widowhood, and the matron-like graces of affectionate regret, on the countenance of her suffering mother. "What a comfort would she endeavour to be to her! and might she be permitted to speak of her lamented father---how soothing would be the reciprocal voice of sympathy!"

Such were the ideas that occupied her mind till she arrived at her mother's house,

when, glowing with the undisguised emotions of genuine affection, she, with a step of inquietude and impatience, bounded up-stairs, softly ejaculating, "Where—where is my mother?" The servants gave way in respectful admiration, and naturally imagined some mistake had occurred in this young lady's arrival. The maid who was to be Emily's attendant pressed forward; but, on a nearer view of the elegant figure before her, stammered out an apology, that Mrs. Grosvenor was not at home, and requested to know if her little girl had been detained by any accident on the road.

Emily, good humouredly smiling, said, "She hoped they would soon be better acquainted; that *her name* was Grosvenor;" and then made the tenderest enquiries after the state of her mother's health and spirits.

Ashamed to offer to such a young lady the childish preparation for supper, the

maid requested to know what refreshment she would please to order. Choaked with disappointment, the unbidden tears rolled down her blooming cheeks; she desired to have tea immediately; and she would then retire to bed. On her pillow long did she ruminate on the cause of so uncomfortable a reception; she had purposely omitted to ask any question of the servants in regard to her mother's engagement, but charitably concluded some indispensable business had taken her from home, and, with this natural conclusion, she fell asleep, nor did the usual bustle of Mrs. Grosvenor's return disturb the serenity of her repose. The mother's enquiries after the child—of her arrival—and whether she appeared much fatigued, drew only the most laconic answers from the domestics; a sort of stifled laugh agitated their features, and she being out of humour from recent occurrences, dismissed her own maid for the night, with-

out attempting to take a view of her sleeping Emily; or without making farther enquiries about her appearance or stature.

Maria Sandford was more curious—she stole to Emily's bedside, and great was her surprise to behold a beautiful girl, without any traces of that extreme juvenility she had been taught to expect. As far as she could judge, Emily appeared as if she would prove a formidable rival in every respect.

When Emily was summoned to her mother's dressing-room in the morning, language is inadequate to describe their different emotions, and the almost equal surprise which marked their respective features. Emily was flying into the arms of her mother, but involuntarily stopped within a few yards of the sofa; for she saw there reclining, not the interesting figure of suppressed sorrow, but the elegant emblem of taste and fashion; not the maternal cheek glowing with hope

and fond expectation, but varnished by art, and eyes animated by the astonishment of the moment, not suffused by the tears of painful or pleasing agitation.

Mrs. Grosvenor beheld in Emily—not the little delicate creature she had parted with, but a lovely blooming girl, whose height and figure gave every promise of future perfection. A profusion of auburn hair shaded the brilliancy of her beautiful hazel eyes, the bloom of health animating her features with every expression that could interest a mother's heart, the symmetry of her form was more peculiarly displayed from the scanty attire she wore, appearing as if she had recently outgrown the garb of childhood; her fine turned ankle and arm were more conspicuous from this circumstance, than even those of the votaries of custom and of fashion. Native modesty had suggested the idea of veiling her bosom, and Emily stood before her mother in the attitude of expectation,

mingled with the fear of disappointment ; then, timidly advancing to the sofa, she said, “ My dear mamma, how I have longed to see you ! ”

“ I am really so astonished at the rapidity of your growth, Emily ; so totally unprepared for the appearance of a young woman (when I consider your childish age) that I hardly know in what manner to address you.” Emily’s feelings received so severe a check from the coldness of her mother’s manner, that she burst into tears, and falteringly said, “ If you do but love me, I shall be happy.”

Mrs. Grosvenor endeavoured to laugh at the emotions she evinced ; and, saluting her glowing cheek, introduced Maria, entreating them to prepare the breakfast immediately, as she had many engagements on her list for the morning. The conversation then turned upon dress and fashion ; Emily’s ideas were bewildered ; and she could hardly believe that this was

the meeting which she had long looked to with pleasing solicitude; and consternation was added to the feeling of the moment, when Mrs. Grosvenor, suddenly turning towards her, rather petulantly, requested to know---why such a child in years was so wrapped up in an odious muslin handkerchief, and with no very gentle effort she instantly removed the incumbrance from her neck.

At this instant Sir George Sinclair was announced: Emily, surprised at her mother's action, and vexed and disconcerted at the entrance of a stranger, conceiving her appearance to be highly indecorous, was in a moment suffused with the blush of resentment and offended modesty, and with the agility of a school girl, she suddenly escaped from the room.

Sir George had seen her sufficiently to discover that she was formed in nature's fairest mould; and requested to know the name of such an angelic creature.

"If you value the peace of a mother, dear Sir George, do not attempt to bewilder the ideas of my long-expected Emily. She is such a mere child, that I tremble lest she should give credit to the detestable arts of flattery," was Mrs. Grosvenor's insidious reply.

Sir George, wishing to keep upon good terms with this exemplary mother, complimented her on Emily being the lovely counterpart of herself, delicately hinting his surprise that Miss Grosvenor was so remarkably tall of her age, not venturing to suppose she had attained her seventeenth year.

For some time Emily was constantly secluded from company, and always being spoken of as a child, few took the trouble of enquiring about her. Sir George Sinclair's attentions were redoubled to the mother, politically encouraging the idea of Emily's extreme youth, and if chance ever threw her in his way, he thought him-

self authorised to treat her with more freedom than he would have dared to do, had her age been publicly acknowledged.

Emily passed a dull uncomfortable life; instead of the tender endearments of maternal regard, instead of being properly introduced into company, she was generally secluded in her own apartment, and confined there when her mother's gay parties assembled in the drawing-room. Her own mind furnished her with frequent resources of amusement; still it was not in nature for a young girl, when the sound of revelry caught her ear, not to wish to be sometimes admitted to partake of its gaiety, nor could her penetration discover why she was continually secluded.

Mrs. Grosvenor had never mentioned her husband's name; Emily often pondered over and wept at this omission, but she had not resolution to begin the affecting subject, and time dully glided on, frequently occasioning her vain regrets, that

she had left her beloved governess, and her equally dear companions.

Just at this period, a letter which she received from a school-fellow, whose family resided within a few streets of her mother's house, afforded her comfort, and eventually that variety she so naturally wished for.

In the first year of Emily's being at school, Miss Fitsmorton manifested for her the most flattering partiality, and being nearly two years her senior, possessed the power, as well as the inclination, to be both her protectress and her friend. She, however, left school some time before Emily, and was just now returned home from a visit in the country, and hearing that her friend was settled at home, she delayed not to send her the above-mentioned letter. Scarcely a day now passed but Emily and Mary Fitsmorton were together. Mrs. Grosvenor felt relieved that her daughter could be so

much domesticated in a respectable family, and took it for granted, that she associated with people both amiable and good.

The winter passed pleasantly. Mrs. Fitsmorton was a charming woman, endowed with every good quality of the head and heart; and the lovely neglected Emily could not but with pain draw an unpleasant comparison between her and her own dissipated mother.

It required much art and management for Sir George Sinclair to keep on good terms with Mrs. Grosvenor; her fortune was the magnet of attraction, but Emily's youth and beauty had deeply impressed him with admiration, and although before her mother he affected to treat her as a child, he never let pass any opportunity to whisper in her ear the impassioned language of admiration and flattery; and had Emily been independent of her mother, she might have received an open

avowal of his passion, but prudential motives swayed the Baronet, and all things passed on much as usual till the commencement of the ensuing winter, when Sir George Sinclair altered his behaviour towards Emily. His pecuniary distresses became pressing, and though madly in love with the daughter, something like a declaration of regard had been made to the mother, who endeavoured to appear satisfied with its sincerity. Policy, therefore, now induced him to treat Emily with respectful attention, claiming the privilege of future relationship to authorise the friendly sentiments he expressed.--- Emily was pleased at the change in his conduct; she had always parried his flattery by turning it into ridicule, but sometimes thought his behaviour to her mother both ambiguous and extraordinary, and was much astonished at the partiality which Mrs. Grosvenor evinced for Sir George Sinclair, for she *romantically*

thought that, from their disparity of years, little happiness could be expected from their union ; and, with many sighs to the memory of her father, she felt it strange that he should be so soon forgotten.

With all Mrs. Grosvenor's art and management, it was now impossible to prevent Emily's introduction to some of her acquaintance, and a more improper circle could hardly be selected for a young woman just entering into life. High play, and every species of amusement which could fascinate the senses or mislead the judgement, were countenanced by this weak ill-judging woman.

As soon as the novelty of these scenes was over, Emily wished again to be domesticated in Mr. Fitsmorton's family ; rationality, as far as existing circumstances would permit, marked there the progress of the day. In Mrs. Fitsmorton she ever found a sincere friend and a faithful adviser, ready to promote the innocent pleasures

of life, but scrupulously rigid in preserving their proper boundaries. Music, dancing, working, and reading, passed the hours of sociability in this domestic circle; but as in every family there is some dark shade to cloud its brightest prospects, it may not be uninteresting to give a brief account of its present and former situation.

CHAP. II.

Mrs. Fitsmorton was early married, without her choice, and certainly without her inclination. She would have assimilated with the pursuits of her husband, but the moroseness of his temper ever prevented that cordiality so necessary to the happiness of a female mind; and she could only, by the most prudent management, and the disposition of an angel, soften the miseries which threatened her. The arrangements of domestic life seldom interested Mr. Fitsmorton; gaiety overpowered his spirits, and general society was oppressive and troublesome. His meals, even his very dress, were often great sources of inquietude, and no professor of the culinary art ever took more pains to arrive at perfection, than did his exemplary wife in the directive department of her table. They were blessed with a son

and daughter, who, from their very infancy, feared their father and idolized their mother. Edward Fitsmorton was a few years older than his sister, and soon selected from the female groupe he had been introduced to by his mother, a lovely young woman of good family and fortune, to whom he became so truly attached, that, after overcoming some difficulties, they were happily united. The birth of a daughter seemed to increase their felicity, and even the austerity of Mr. Fitsmorton's temper appeared in some measure to relax, when witnessing the harmony of his children. Mary lived at her brother's house almost as much as she did at home; the child was her delight and her fondest darling, and Mrs. Fitsmorton seemed recompensed for former inquietudes. When the infant was about three months old, Edward Fitsmorton was seized with a contagious fever, which seemed to baffle the power of medical skill; but, after a long

and painful struggle, he recovered, to the joy and happiness of all around him.

Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton, from fatigue and anxiety, had been obliged to wean her little girl, and this fond, this affectionate wife, fell a martyr to her attendance on the bed of sickness.

To dwell on the scenes which followed, were a painful and unnecessary task. Edward Fitsmorton deplored his loss, either in the wild effusions of frantic grief, or in the dreadful calmness of apathy and apparent indifference.

Miss Fitsmorton was inconsolable, and lamented with unavailing sorrow the loss of her dear and beloved companion.—Indeed so fixed a dejection overpowered her spirits, that no usual occupation could interest or arouse the faculties of her mind, except attending to the infant and her brother. Gradual was the recovery of his intellectual powers; and in gratitude to the solicitude of his mother and friends,

he attempted to pursue his avocations; and at intervals to join the family circle; but still he thought happiness was fled for ever; and the blooming graces of Mary Dalrymple, and her endearing conduct as a wife and mother, were remembered with the feelings of despair, when reflecting on the sad change a few short months had made in his prospects.

When Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton had been dead nearly twelve months, Emily Grosvenor was first introduced into the family. Miss Fitsmorton was still dejected, and frequent fits of abstraction and melancholy overpowered Edward Fitsmorton's deeply wounded mind. Emily esteemed and honoured him for such proofs of tender attachment, and by every delicate attention in her power she endeavoured to tranquilize his agitated spirits. She would sometimes, unbidden, play over his favourite lessons, or intreat his assistance in the finishing of some landscape or painting.

and was gay or grave, as the humour of his mind prevailed. His little girl soon distinguished her with peculiar regard, which was a very pleasing gratification to Emily's affectionate heart. Mr. Fitsmorton's gloomy austerity of manner sometimes interrupted the harmony of the evening ; and Emily fancied that her attentions to him were not so pleasing as upon their first acquaintance ; for she had often ventured to rally him into good humour. When music made his head ache—dancing was too noisy ; and he declared drawing precluded conversation ; yet when Emily was absent (as she was sometimes obliged to attend her mother's parties) Edward was more gloomy than usual, and Mary silently dejected.

To the great surprise of Emily, Mrs. Grosvenor requested one morning that she would accompany her in the chariot, if she could spare time from the new friends that so much engrossed her attention.

"Had I known, Madam," (Emily answered) "that you ever wished for my company, all engagements should have been suspended."

"Very dutifully spoken, Miss Grosvenor; we shall soon be convinced if your future actions correspond with your present professions. The chariot will be at the door in half an hour. I have something of consequence to communicate to you."

Emily felt disappointed; she was that morning engaged with her friend, Mary Fitsmorton. Edward had been much out of spirits the preceding evening, and had promised he would read some favourite author, whilst they were finishing a set of cambric frocks, which they had voluntarily undertaken to make for his little girl.

When seated in the carriage with her mother, Mrs. Grosvenor thus addressed her:

"I have long indulged you, Emily, in

the choice and pursuit of your own avocations and amusements, and I wish seriously to ask you, who these people are, that seem to have rivalled me in your affection.

“I hear, from very good authority, that you are receiving the attentions of the disconsolate widower, if you have not already carried on with him a clandestine correspondence.”

Emily's colour heightened—astonishment for a moment kept her silent; but, fearing her confusion would be construed into an avowal of the fact, she replied:—

“Whoever has fabricated and imposed upon you such a story, is neither your friend nor mine: I deny not, Madam, my attachment to the family, but to have suffered a clandestine correspondence with Mr. Edward Fitzmorton, is so highly improbable, that I cannot believe you give credit to the information.—He is so truly

attached to the memory of his wife, that a second love will never agitate his bosom."

"And you positively and unequivocally deny *your regard* for this extraordinary and immaculate gentleman?"

"No, Madam, I do not deny my regard; I love him almost as well as I love his sister."

"A tolerably bold declaration for so young a girl to make; and you do not then suppose he loves you as well as he loves his sister?"

Emily blushed and hesitated: Mrs. Grosvenor had wandered from the point, and added—

"If he would marry you, do you think your sisterly affection could refuse the honour?"

"With truth I can affirm,—I have never debated with myself on the subject: I think I shall never have the trial; in all probability Mr. Edward Fitsmorton will not marry again."

“ Well then, Emily, I much rejoice to find I have been mistaken. I am now going to put your sincerity to the test, as you confess that your heart is disengaged. Rank and wealth court your acceptance, nor can I have the least doubt of your ready acquiescence to my wishes.”

“ I hardly comprehend your meaning, Madam.”

“ Affected simplicity cannot impose upon me ; you must imagine I mean marriage.

“ Lord Sedley made proposals to me in form on your account, and will this afternoon declare himself to you.”

“ To prevent such unnecessary trouble, pray, Madam, let him receive, through you, my acknowledgements for the honour he intends me, but I—”

“ Have a care, Emily, let not an unwarrantable prejudice shade the brilliant career which is opening to your view. You are not now to be told that your father wisely left you dependent upon me.

“ I have such views and expectations for my future life, that must prevent your establishment from my fortune.”

“ My father, Madam, only wished you to be just in its distribution.”

“ How dare you mention a name which always fills my bosom with unutterable grief; ill should I repay his generous confidence, if I permitted the caprice of a wayward girl to reject the splendour which awaits her. Remember, I will not be trifled with; receive Lord Sedley as your future husband, or tremble at my displeasure.”

Emily could hardly command her feelings at the farcical part her mother was acting, and almost involuntarily she exclaimed,

“ Surely, Madam, some mistake has occurred in this affair; Lord Sedley must mean to make proposals to yourself: as my father-in-law, I would endeavour to respect him.”

“ The satire of your manner, Miss Grosvenor, is not overlooked ; but, mark me, Emily, if you refuse Lord Sedley’s addresses, I am no longer your mother.”

“ I wish to obey you, Madam, in every reasonable command ; but I will never become the wife of Lord Sedley.”

She then bore in silence all the violence of her mother’s reproaches, nor endeavoured to stem their torrent by the shadow of a compromise, and on her return home was assailed on the subject by Maria, who, purposely tutored by Mrs. Grosvenor, endeavoured to point out the various advantages of becoming a countess : diamonds, pearls, and carriages, were placed in splendid array before the inattentive Emily ; who, absorbed in her own reflections, was only aroused by Miss Sandford confirming the supicion, that Mrs. Grosvenor would shortly become Lady Sinclair. Emily was obliged to give many hints that she wished to be alone, ere this weak-

mindful young woman took her leave ; and then sad, indeed, were her solitary reflections !—She was dependent on her mother ; she was threatened with becoming the wife of a man she detested, and might probably be torn from the society of friends who had of late constituted her whole felicity ; but, like most young minds, though hers gave way to the momentary feelings of despair, it as soon recovered its native elasticity. Her good governess, Mrs. Mason, had ever by precept and example inculcated the necessity of a proper exertion of fortitude and resolution on every occasion, and Emily began now to experience its salutary effects. She determined that no human power should force her to marry Lord Sedley. She would consult Mrs. Fittsmorton on the subject, and with feelings of the deepest regret she again drew the comparison of the different characters of Mary's mother and her own.

When summoned to dinner, Lord Sedley, appearing like the destroyer of her late happy prospects, he was treated by her with proud indifference.—In vain the displeasure of her mother's countenance, in vain the flattering compliments of the enamoured peer.—She remained provokingly silent, only planning some scheme to escape the dreaded declaration. By her mother's contrivance a tête-a-tête was accomplished. But not to dwell on the common-place declarations of Lord Sedley's unalterable passion, or the many inducements he held out—of rank, wealth, and power over his idolizing heart, or how she endeavoured to restrain the contempt and impatience of her feelings, when she decisively refused the honours and advantages he intended her. Suffice it to say, that no power can describe the astonishment of Lord Sedley, that his splendid offers were slighted by a girl dependent on her mother, and unknown in

the fashionable world!--Desperately in love with her person, he could not conceal his mortification ; but, knowing well Mrs. Grosvenor's character, he resolved to depend on her management for the accomplishment of his hopes, and rudely and impassionately seizing Emily's hand, he confessed "she was too young to know her own mind ; that the romance of her present determination added the charm of simplicity to her character. That she was too eminently beautiful to tread the common path of life ; but when she became the Countess of Sedley, every distinction an admiring world could bestow, would exclusively irradiate her steps." Then, gazing stedfastly in her countenance, he added,---

" With a face so fair,

" Fairer far than painting can express ;

And he was proceeding in this very ridiculous stile, when Emily, provoked at

the freedom of his manner, and at the general tenor of his language, interrupted him, by laconically adding,---

“ Or *youthful* poets fancy

“ When they love.”

And the peculiar emphasis she laid on the word *youthful*, disconcerted, as she wished it should, her venerable admirer; and they parted, on her side, with real disgust, and on his, with a determination not to relinquish his suit; because she was too young to know her own mind. Of libertine principles, in every sense of the word, Lord Sedley had never before resolved to marry, and this repulse to his vanity was both surprising and unexpected.

Mrs. Grosvenor's rage and indignation were without bounds: Emily was confined to her own apartment, denied the society of her best beloved friends, and only supported by that hope, “springing

eternally in the human mind ;" and which, when founded on the sacred principles of religion, will mitigate the bitterness of every trial or unpleasant situation in life.

Sir George Sinclair was the primary cause of her present distress. Her beauty had awakened his serious admiration, and great was the struggle he experienced, when feigning a passion for the mother, which his heart felt was only due to her fascinating daughter. He was a professed gambler, and practised in every species of depravity ; but hypocrisy had yet, in some measure, concealed his vices ; he was well received in society, and courted by an indiscriminating world.

Could he flatter himself that Emily regarded him with partiality, the rapture of the thought would have set aside all prudential motives, and Mrs. Grovenor's reproaches would have been alike disregarded ; but even his vanity could not en-

courage such an illusion. Emily treated him as her heart dictated before and after his declaration to her mother. He had some acquaintance with Edward Fitzmorton ; he well knew that pity was oftentimes allied to love ; and, from various circumstances, he began to fear that friendship commenced in sympathy and sorrow might end in love and joy. To see Emily the wife of Edward Fitzmorton was an insupportable idea ; but to see her the wife of age and infirmity, might second his nefarious views ; and could he avoid the marriage with her mother, lead her, on easy but dishonourable terms, to his arms. He ever pretended to reprobate the cruelty of Mrs. Grosvenor's proceedings, and took every opportunity of ingratiating himself with the unsuspecting Emily ; for Mrs. Grosvenor, deceived by his semblance of sincerity, permitted him free access to Emily's dressing-room, that he might use every argument and persuasion to induce

her cheerfully to comply with the proposals of Lord Sedley. In the most conciliating language, with a manner tender and respectful, he often availed himself of this permission; and he daily improved in Emily's good opinion, though she could never be reconciled to the idea of his marriage with her mother, on account of the great disparity of their years, and the incongeniality of sentiment she had fearfully observed between them. Her opinions and sentiments were those of nature and of reason, and she drew the standard of others actions and feelings by the simple rectitude of her own.

Miss Fitsmorton began to feel uneasy at Emily's continued absence, and fearing illness was the cause, she gained permission of her mother to make her enquiries in person, for the general dissipation of Mrs. Grosvenor's house had hitherto precluded intimacy there. Emily was denied to her friend, who then requested to see

Mrs. Grosvenor or Miss Sandford. The latter soon attended her, and invented a most plausible story of Emily's undutiful conduct, of the great kindness and consideration of Mrs. Grosvenor, in selecting so advantageous a match for her daughter; and ended the prolix history, by descanting on Emily's ingratitude in refusing to become a countess.

Mary could hardly suppress a smile at the weakness and simplicity of this account; and, after pleading in vain for an interview with her friend, was obliged to leave the house without any further satisfaction. She too well knew Emily's principles and resolution, to fear that she would ever consent to become Lord Sedley's wife; and often had he been held up in ridicule by these blooming associates, for the unbecoming levity of his manners, and for his vain pretensions to youth and vivacity. Often had Mary breathed an imperfect wish, that her brother might at some future

period think of Emily in a tenderer point of view, though hitherto she could not flatter herself that his attentions proceeded from aught but virtuous friendship; and Emily, she well knew, could not be lightly won or satisfied but with an undivided heart.

When she returned home, the family party was assembled in the drawing-room, and Mary declared she had wonderful news to impart. Emily, our dear Emily, is going to be married.

Mrs. Fitsmorton looked incredulous; Mr. Fitsmorton hoped it was a good match; and Edward, hastily putting down his little girl from his arms, opened the window as if in fear of suffocation, at the same time expressing his wishes for her happiness. Mary then mentioned Sir George Sinclair as the favoured man.—Edward bit his lip, and the old gentleman wished to know how the transfer was so easily made from the mother to the daugh-

ter? That it was a very bad match for Emily, and that he acted like a madman, to marry a girl without a shilling of her own, for we all know what dependance may be placed upon her mother's fortune.

Dinner at this moment was announced, and the unfortunate event of a fine cod's head being overboiled, so totally disarranged the good humour of the hour, that Mary did not pursue the subject during the repeated complaints of her father, who declared he would in future dine at a tavern ; he would discharge the cook ; he would recommend every mistress of a family to understand the theory of cooking. In short, he made every one so completely uncomfortable, that the moment decency would permit, Edward took up his hat and left the house, a remedy he always adopted in any family altercation. Mary, wishing to change her father's ideas, seriously described Emily's situation. Mrs. Fitsmorton expressed her sorrow and pity.

"Sorrow and pity, forsooth," (interrupted her husband,) "for what? for the prospect of being splendidly settled for life? The girl is a simpleton, and does not know her own interest. Unconditional obedience is what every parent has a right to expect. I should like to see a child of mine refuse such an offer."

Mary encountered her father's eye, and the blush that suffused her countenance did not escape her mother's observation.

When Edward was assured of Mary's intended mistake of the man to whom Emily was to be united, a satisfaction, almost surprising to himself, stole over his mind; for he was convinced she would not marry a man old enough to be her grandfather; but of Sir George Sinclair, he would have had less doubt; handsome and ^{po}sinuating, her fancy might have been enslaved without the concurrence of her deliberate judgment; and Sir George Sinclair was assuredly not the man he

would have chosen for an husband, either for her or for his sister. Having thus quietly settled this point to his own satisfaction, he recurred to past scenes of happiness, and mourned their eternal loss. Nature had blessed him with a heart susceptible of every good impression, and the early instructions of his mother had cultivated with great success every opening virtue; and the moral precepts which were inculcated as he advanced in years, stamped on his mind an indelible abhorrence of the deliberate pursuits of vice and folly. Had his father been a man whom he could have considered as a friend and companion, even the errors of juvenile indiscretion had, in all probability, been avoided; but Edward early distinguished that his father's presence was generally an awful restraint in the domestic or convivial circle. At the time he first saw Miss Dalrymple, he had resolved to break through the unnecessary shackles of pa-

rental authority ; and he was just yielding to the fascinating prospects which the first emancipation from restraint holds forth, when beauty, love, and merit, prevented the unthinking career, in the bewitching form of Mary Dalrymple ! Both parents had different views for their children, but the young people coming to an explanation of their sentiments, every thing was settled to the tolerable satisfaction of all parties.

Miss Dalrymple was intended for a ward of her father's, who went to India six months after her marriage, happy in the assured friendship and esteem of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton.

Mr. Fitsmorton wished to guide the attention of his son to a young and lively heiress ; and he did not despair but that time and management would now unite them ; for the affluent fortune Miss Travers possessed, would prove a most convenient auxiliary to the finances of

the family, but of course this idea was only encouraged by Edward Fitsmorton's father.

The domestic parties in Mrs. Fitsmorton's drawing-room, had lately proved very dull and uninteresting to her son. Emily's artless attentions, her endeavours to amuse him, her gratification when successful; and her silent, but expressive regret, when the depression of his spirits would not yield to her exertions, being suddenly withdrawn, he soon sought, in the gayer scenes of dissipation, relief from his various and contending feelings.

Emily was still a prisoner in her mother's house. Miss Sandford and Sir George Sinclair were her only visitants. The former was the echo of her mother's commands, and the latter was daily gaining her confidence, and rising in her good opinion. Sometimes he would condole with her on the severity of Mrs. Grosvenor's conduct, and endeavour to alleviate

the dulness of her situation by every attention and means in his power; and if at any time thrown off his guard by her fascinating expressions of gratitude, he would immediately assume an almost parental tenderness of manner; and solemnly aver, that the moment Mrs. Grosvenor gave him a title to protect her, he would exert it to the utmost of his power: artfully insinuating, that the day was nearly fixed for the long desired event.

To Mrs. Grosvenor he expressed little doubt but that time would gain Emily's free consent to the match; and Mrs. Grosvenor, in her turn, deceived Lord Sedley with the same assurance; promising that maternal authority should interpose if milder methods proved unsuccessful. Lord Sedley, whose love sprang only from the source of a libertine inclination, was little solicitous how he obtained the hand of Emily, if eventually

secure of it, her personal attractions would render him the envy of all ; and he imagined her youth and inexperience would timidly yield to the caprices of his temper.

Some recent circumstances in the annals of gallantry, induced him to resolve to travel immediately after their marriage ; and this idea, joined to his convenient declaration, that he would take Emily without a fortune, were the grand and interesting reasons for Mrs. Grosvenor's perserverance in his favour.

Sir George Sinclair continued to improve the opportunities of increasing Emily's esteem, nor could he have more conciliated her favour, than in contriving to give her the following letter from Miss Fitsmorton :—

To Miss Grosvenor.

“ I will no longer debar myself the satisfaction of writing a few lines to my

dearest Emily. Sir George Sinclair has undertaken to deliver this to you ; that he proves so kind and so considerate a friend, affords me unspeakable satisfaction on your account.

“ I need not enforce to you the resolution never to become Lord Sedley’s wife ; for I know your just contempt of rank and wealth, when put in competition with *the affections of the heart*.—Oh, Emily ! how much is contained in these words !

“ I find every thing is settled between your mother and Sir George Sinclair ; this is a subject I never can discuss with patience. We all miss you more than I can express. Edward seems quite to have deserted us. Emily, it was indeed a cruel misfortune which deprived him of the comforts of domestic life. With the most honourable tendency to all that is good, he may yet be led into the paths of error, the claims of husband and of fa-

ther, were such sacred barriers, that he would ever avoided the delusions of vice and folly.

“ The angel we have lost ! had you known her ! had you loved her as I did !

“ Peculiar circumstances contributed so to unite our hearts in friendship, that death only can erase the sacred remembrance ! These are strong expressions ; yet they but faintly trace what passes in my bosom !

“ My dear mother, I know, often wonders at the uncommon depression of spirits I labour under. My friend, you know not half her excellencies !

“ But I am talking of myself, when you are alone the subject of my writing. Oh, that you could fly to our protection ! that my mother's arms could shelter you ! that her counsels could instruct you how to act !---But were it on your part practicable to come to us, my father is, I fear, so prejudiced a judge of the authority of

a parent, and the obedience of a child, that I dare not urge you to think of a plan, which might prove so inimical to the peace of many.

“ Our sweet little pet, Mary, often inquires for you, Dear child, what a loss ~~she~~ has sustained, in being deprived of her mother ! Should Edward ever marry again, may I be enabled to love, as I wish to do, the second mother of this interesting darling !

“ I have just had a charming letter from our dear governess ; her brother is dead, and has left her a very handsome fortune ; and, after remaining at Ipswich, where she now is for a year or too, she will settle nearer town : her letter is long and affectionate. She will write to you soon, and speaks of you with great interest and kindness.

“ Heaven bless you, dear Emily ; be resolute. I have more reasons than I dare acknowledge for wishing you were not

dependent upon your mother. But there is a Being, who is a Father to the fatherless ; and to his never-failing protection the prayer of friendship consigns you. Believe me, always,

“ Your affectionate

“ MARY FITSMORTON.”

Emily pondered on the contents of this letter ; she knew that her mother was not a favourite with her friend, but Mary would not speak so forcibly without some peculiar meaning. Alas ! she knew not how busily the tongue of fame had whispered the secrets of her mother's conduct ! and that gaming was undermining her once affluent fortune !

Lord Sedley, wholly depending on Mrs. Grosvenor's management, sent Emily the most costly presents ; declaring, that he would not again intrude upon her presence till she met him at the altar ; and every thing appeared drawing to a conclusion,

Miss Sandford continually assuring Emily, that the most splendid preparations were making for her's and for her mother's wedding.

“ Cannot you,” (Emily despairingly asked Miss Sandford) “ cannot you assist me in any plan to avoid this hated marriage ?”

“ Dear me, no; how can you suppose I would act so contrary to your good mother's wishes? I wish you would hear reason. An offer from a man of quality does not occur every day. See these elegant presents, and judge from them of the munificence of his spirit. Only think, how lovely you will appear in your bridal robes; and then to take precedence of your mother, to be called *my Lady*, at every word. What if my Lord is a few years older than yourself, and looks rather unhealthy, every thing happens for the best; and you may one day be left wholly independent of the world.”

Emily sat the image of despair, vacantly gazing at her loquacious cousin, who almost supposed, by the silence of her companion, that her rhetoric had prevailed. She immediately communicated her ill-formed hopes to Mrs. Grosvenor, who soon after sought a conference with Emily, and found how much Maria had been deceived in her conclusions.

Emily, at first, pleaded for mercy; entreated to be sent away any where, to be for ever buried in solitude, rather than marry Lord Sedley: but, finding all her arguments were either treated with ridicule or severity, she resolutely declared no power on earth should force her to comply.

"You play the heroine most admirably," returned her mother, "but this extraordinary spirit of yours may be subdued. In one week more you will be Lord Sedley's wife, nor shall you leave this house but under his protection." Mrs. Grosvenor then abruptly left the room,

and Emily resolved to consult Sir George Sinclair on some means of escape from the misery that awaited her.

Escape to whom? What plan could she adopt? She dared not involve Miss Fitts-morton in the attempt. The illiberal reflections her mother had passed, precluded the possibility of her claiming Mrs. Fitts-morton's protection. Would it not be throwing herself in the way of Edward, and unnecessarily exciting his compassion? She avowed to her own heart that the sisterly affection she felt for him, would ever make the restoration of his happiness conducive to her own. She honoured him for the respect and enthusiastic attachment he had evinced for the memory of his wife, and with somewhat of the romantic sentiments of youth, she deemed it impossible, or, at least improbable, that he could ever love again: hence the innocent familiarity with which she had ever treated him; and the efforts

she exerted to soothe and amuse his mind, were the pure dictates of her native benevolence.

She thought of Mrs. Mason. Could she procure her address at Ipswich, she would fly to her protection. She would consult Sir George Sinclair on the subject ; and, with something like a palliation of her perplexities, she sought on her pillow the repose of innocence.

Far different were the waking or the sleeping reveries of Mrs. Grosvenor. She dreaded an investigation of her conduct by the man she knew she was so grossly deceiving ; and, whilst the fictitious smiles of animation illumined her countenance, all was anarchy and confusion in her bosom.

A few evenings before the dreaded marriage day, Emily and her mother had, as usual, parted in distress and anger ; and, Emily seeing a paper on the carpet, near the chair Mrs. Grosvenor had been sitting

on, she carelessly took it up, imagining it might be a bill, or a letter upon business; but as she flung it upon the table, the words *adoration, love, and surprise*, caught her attention; and, without waiting a moment for reflection, she hastily unfolded the paper, and read a confirmation of every depravity that woman could be guilty of. The letter was addressed to Mrs. Grosvenor, from a foreigner of distinction, who was just arrived in England. He reproached her with her faithless conduct, avowed his continued love and adoration; and concluded with reverting to scenes which had passed even before the death of Mr. Grosvenor, and all in such impassioned language, and in a stile so new to the innocent and agitated Emily, that this appeared to be the bitterest trial she ever could experience.

Absorbed in a chaos of reflections, she was vainly endeavouring to collect her ideas for some plan of immediate action,

when Sir George Sinclair, claiming, as usual, the privilege of visiting her on the old argument of persuasion from her mother, knocked for admittance at the door of her apartment.

Mrs. Grosvenor having in the morning answered the above-mentioned letter; and, as she fancied, secured it in her writing-table, thought no more of so fatal an evidence of her depravity: She had just dismissed Lord Sedley, with fresh assurances that a few days would complete his happiness, and was preparing for an interview with her former lover, in order to lull him into a security of her faith, when Sir George Sinclair unwelcomely made his appearance. She, of course, pleaded some engagement of business, not expecting the happiness of seeing him that evening, but said, Maria would make tea for him in Emily's dressing-room; and, with the semblance of real regard, she lamented the necessity of leaving him for

an hour or two. Without enquiring for Miss Sandford, he, as before-mentioned, sought the disconsolate Emily.

The sight of a man so wronged, so deceived, who was soon to become the husband of her mother, brought tears to her relief; but the death-like paleness of her countenance, and the cold shivering of her frame, alarmed him with real apprehension that indisposition was the cause.

“ Good God ! my dear girl, you are ill, very ill,” (was his first anxious exclamation) ; and taking her cold hand in both his own, gave it a tenderer pressure than he usually ventured to do.

“ Is it in the power of friendship, my dear Emily, to adopt any plan for your relief ? I have procured Mrs. Mason’s address, and could you venture the journey in a stage, I am almost tempted to advise you to go to her immediately.”

“ I wish I knew what I ought to do.”

“ I have in vain endeavoured to per-

suade your mother to let our marriage take place first, because I should then be entitled to protect you ; but she will see you the countess of Sedley before we are united."

Emily could only articulate---

" My poor mother !"

Sir George was surprised at the peculiarity of her manner : he endeavoured to soothe her mind, and again mentioned his approaching nuptials.

" Dear Sir George," (she emphatically replied) " ought you to marry my mother ?"

Her incoherence and energy startled him, but soon the depravity of his own mind drew but one conclusion from her manner. Vanity led him to suppose that the comparison which she made between Lord Sedley and himself, thus agitated her feelings. He regarded her in silence, undecided how to act ; how to assure her that her partiality was understood and

fully appreciated, momentarily expecting a fuller explanation of her sentiments.

Far different were Emily's meditations ; to expose her mother to Sir George Sinclair, was a dreadful thought---to let him marry her, was equally repulsive to her feelings. She resolved to go immediately to Mrs. Mason, and request her advice in this distressing business. Assuming therefore a resolute dignity of manner, she communicated to Sir George Sinclair her intentions. He listened with well-dissembled respect, and readily took the management of her escape upon himself.

"How, cheerfully," (he continued) "would I be your protector in the journey ! but this I am persuaded your mother would never pardon. Be it, however, my care to ensure to you her future favour ; and when she is my wife, you shall confess that my authoritative or persuasive powers are unlimited. Cheer up,

dearest Emily, and trust me ever as your guardian and your friend."

"Will you give me your sacred promise to defer your marriage with my mother one fortnight longer?"

Again was the gentleman puzzled beyond all comprehension; however, he felt little difficulty in making her the most solemn assurances to defer the ceremony much longer if she wished it. Often was he tempted to clasp her to his bosom, to confess that she only was the object of his love and admiration; that she only should guide his future destiny."

But, suppressing the language of ecstasy, he urged the necessity of quickly ascertaining some plan for her escape, as Miss Sandford was every moment expected in the room.

At length it was concluded, that Sir George Sinclair, by engaging Mrs. Grosvenor at cards till a very late hour, on

the following evening, or, more strictly speaking, till early in the morning, he would settle his plans with a confidential servant, (who already considered him as the future master of the house) that he should have little difficulty in conveying Emily in safety to the Ipswich coach; that he himself would secure a place, and considerably hoped to find, on their arrival at the inn, some respectable person to whose care he might recommend her. That he advised her to write a few lines to Mrs. Mason, apprising her of the visitor she might expect, and he would forward the letter by the first coach in the morning.

Emily wrote a short letter to Mrs. Mason, and, after having given it to Sir George Sinclair, he took leave for the evening, exulting at the happy chance which had encouraged such hopes of the enchanting Emily's partiality for him.

His future plans were yet almost unknown to himself. The more he reflected

on her extraordinary emotion, when she wished him to defer his marriage with Mrs. Grosvenor, the more he was convinced the struggle between love and duty occasioned it, and his repugnance to marry her mother became every hour more unconquerable.

When Maria entered the room, she was surprised to find Emily alone. She had impatiently dispatched some domestic employment, in order to partake of the passing compliments and gay conversation of Sir George Sinclair; and fancying that Emily was uncommonly spiritless and dull, she soon made an excuse to leave her to her own meditations; first assuring her of the liberality of Lord Sedley, who, she said, had made the most costly presents both to Mrs. Grosvenor and to herself. She advised her to keep up her spirits, and to study her good looks a little, observing, that she appeared more fit for a funeral than a wedding.

Emily felt relieved by a few hours of solitude, and when she retired to rest, for the first time in her life vainly courted sleep's refreshing power.

CHAP. III.

ON the following morning Emily was much distressed to see her mother enter the dressing room, accompanied by the elegant paraphernalia, preparatory for the expected occasion. A faintness overpowered her senses, and for some time she could hardly comprehend the meaning of the scene before her.

“ It is very natural, Emily, that you should feel acutely the great change of situation that awaits you. All your attire is answerable to these beautiful dresses, and your jewels are most superb ;” (opening a shagreen case which contained a diamond necklace).

Emily involuntarily pushed them from her ; and, shivering with convulsive agony, as she thought of her mother’s conduct, falteringly exclaimed,—

“ Is it possible ?”

" These tragedy airs, Miss Grosvenor, may suit the heroine of a novel; but do *you* pray act like a reasonable being."

Emily burst into tears.

" Come, come, child, exert a little more resolution. Lord Sedley awaits your consent to see you, previously to the ceremony. But, be this as it may, on the day after to-morrow you are to become his wife; a special licence is procured, and you will leave England on a tour of pleasure the following morning.

Emily gasped for breath, but with as much serenity as she could command, she said,—

" I will endeavour to exert myself, if you, Madam, will promise me not to admit Lord Sedley to my presence, till I am obliged to meet him in the drawing-room."

" Most despotic Princess! this is a strange caprice of temper, but you shall be indulged. I will endeavour to per-

suade Lord Sedley to accede to your ridiculous terms. But, mark me well, if you dare to trifle with us, or presume on this my foolish indulgence, by any future disobedience, may beggary and wretchedness be your portion for ever !”

Emily trembled, and endeavoured to say something conciliating, but the words died upon her lips. and she saw her mother depart, without the power or the wish to detain her. At length, being left alone, she exclaimed,

“ And is this the being to whom I owe my existence ? Whatever be my future fate, would that I could save her from infamy and wretchedness ! A mother’s name coupled with such epithets as these !—

“ Poor Sir George, he deserves a better fate ! but, can it be ! My father ! my deceived, confiding father ! Shall I ever forget the last expression of his countenance, which spoke the blessings his tongue denied to utter !”

Too much softened by these heart-rending emotions, she was obliged to exert her utmost resolution to go through the painful task which awaited her.

Maria told her at a late hour in the evening, that Sir George and her mother were playing at piquet; that he was considerably the winner, but kept Mrs. Grosvenor in perfect good humour, by constantly reverting to the idea, "that as one interest would soon guide them, pecuniary considerations were of little moment," Maria, adding, "that the playful fooleries of lovers being always uninteresting to by-standers, she had left them for the evening, as they had just sent away the sandwiches, and were again engaged in the game with great spirit. So good-night, Emily," she continued, "though not long must I presume to call you so; therefore, by way of practice, good-night, my dear elected Countess of Sedley."

It was not till morning that Sir George

Sinclair pretended to take leave of his intended bride : fortune had been to him most propitious, and he left her with a larger sum of money in his possession than he had dared to hope would fall to his lot.

Emily endeavoured to gain a little repose, so needful to strengthen her agitated frame, and to compose her drooping spirits : but, finding the effort useless, she sat in fearful expectation, awaiting the little bustle of Sir George Sinclair's departure.

She was not quite satisfied with the plan she had adopted, but she hoped the exigency of the case would excuse her leaving her mother's house in so clandestine a manner ; and when once sheltered by Mrs. Mason's protection, she could better resolve how to act to save both Sir George and her mother from future misery and repentance : and she began to reason herself into the belief that the step she was about to take, was the only means to free

herself from the expected detested marriage.

At the appointed hour she heard the signal at her dressing-room door, and she met Sir George with tolerable composure. The servant had procured them a hackney-coach ; the morning was dark and gloomy ; numberless were the protestations of her companion, that her interest and her happiness should ever be the first object of his life ; but Emily, absorbed in her own reflections, little heeded the hurried and agitated manner in which he addressed her. She again received his willing promise, that more than a fortnight should elapse before he married her mother, and on their arrival at the stage door, she gave him her hand in token of gratitude for all his kind attentions.

Nothing particular occurred during the journey. A very thick fog excited the fears and apprehensions of the female

passengers, but Emily, wishing to shun observation, sat silently and abstractedly in one corner of the vehicle, and preferred the refreshment of a biscuit to partaking of the hurried-repast prepared for the passengers. Indeed, this had been Sir George Sinclair's earnest recommendation ; and though it subjected her to the facetious remarks or the ill-will of her hungry companions, her thoughts were too much occupied to heed their general animadversions.

" Welcome to Harwich, good folks," at length aroused her attention.

" To Harwich !" Emily said, " I believe you mean Ipswich, Madam," (addressing a loquacious vulgar-looking woman.)

" Indeed, Miss, I mean what I says," she answered, " but I supposes you are in love, as they say, or you mought have easily seen this was not the Ipswich stage. Had you been sociably inclined, and eat and drank like your neighbours, you would

Have found out the mistake before now. I ax pardon, but it is always ill convenient to be above one's company."

So saying, she alighted from the coach, and left Emily to follow the rest of the passengers at her leisure. Too truly convinced by the mistress of the inn that she had really arrived at Harwich, and attributing the mistake to every cause but the right, she did not weakly give way to fruitless repining, but requested to have a bed-room prepared immediately, and to be conducted to a sitting-room where she could not be intruded upon.

"I'll see what I can do, Miss," the landlady answered, "but the house is quite full;" and Emily heard her say, as she left her in a little mean parlour, "Very extraordinary indeed!"

Emily's situation was not an enviable one: Weary of conjecture, she recollected how necessary it was to ensure the civility of the house, by ordering supper.

Ringling, therefore, for the waiter, she desired to have some refreshment as soon as possible. During her uncomfortable repast the tears of disappointment could not be restrained at this unlucky mistake.—“ Her dear Mrs. Mason ! what anxiety she would feel on her account ! and most surprising it appeared, that Sir George Sinclair’s boasted care and attention should have so materially failed ; in the morning she could better determine what plan to pursue ;” and was about to order the presence of the chamber-maid, when a man, apparently a stranger, entered the room. Imagining he would instantly apologize for the mistake, she for a moment regarded him in silence ; but seeing him approach the table, she was advancing towards the bell, when throwing off his horseman’s coat and hat, she recognized the person of Sir George Sinclair ! The first impulse of her mind was to welcome him as her protector ; but, checked by the exultation of

his manner, something like the truth bewildered her imagination. His impassioned gaze, and insulting expressions of everlasting love and gratitude, soon confirmed her well-grounded suspicions; and he even dared to thank her for the preference she had evinced in his favour.

"Your conduct, Sir," she replied, "is perfectly enigmatical; but I only now insist on your immediate absence."

"Hear me with candour: let love plead my cause; let love excuse my temerity."

She had nearly reached the bell, when holding her forcibly back, he continued:

"What but the hope of improving your tender preference of me to Lord Sedley, of devoting my whole life to your service, could induce me delicately to understand your flattering wishes to procrastinate my union with your mother? and to interpret the enchanting agitation of your spirits, when you made the request in my own favour?"

"Hold, Sir," she interrupted, "this is too much. Could I give credit to this deceptive idea, the sanity of my understanding might indeed be questioned; that I still have a motive for wishing your union with my mother for ever deferred, is most true: time may develop it, but all communication with me is now at an end."

"Why so hasty, dearest Emily? I am not alarmed at the mystery of your expressions. I had not sacrificed interest to love, without having formed suitable resolutions."

"I am not, Sir, to be intimidated by you; this house at present is my protection."

Emily had again nearly reached the bell, when Sir George, who was prepared for violence, reproaches, and fits, though awed by the dignified composure of her manner, forcibly prevented her intention, and said—

"We part not so easily, madam; you

are alone the object of my adoration; and, as chance pointed out to me this plan to secure you mine for ever, you will not wonder if after sacrificing all pecuniary advantages for your sake, I do not relinquish you but with my life."

Emily smiled with contempt and impatience.

"Look not so scornful, Emily, but accept a heart which adores you; return as Lady Sinclair, and put to flight all malignant rumours which are already raised to your disadvantage."

"Your reputation must be tarnished; for who will contradict the fatal truth, that you have voluntarily eloped with your mother's intended husband? Facts are stubborn things; the very servant who attended us in the morning, was a witness to your readiness in leaving your mother's house under my protection, and he provided me the disguise of a horseman's coat, that I might escort you on the out-

side of the coach. But one method remains to save your yet trembling fame, and let us trust to time and chance for future independence."

"Nothing, Sir, but your unmanly violence could have made me listen so long to proposals which meet my abhorrence and contempt."

"Have a care, Miss Grosvenor; unavailing repentance may ensue from this your ill-judged refusal. What resource has that delicate female mind, who has lost friends, reputation, and all that make life respectable and happy?"

"To answer you, or to recriminate, is derogatory to the feelings of offended delicacy."

"And now, my ever lovely Emily is thinking, that the mind can only receive condemnation at its own awful tribunal. But whatever be the sophistry of argument—Oh! let her not brave the world's dread scorn, but in my arms find shelter and protection."

The unlicensed freedom of his looks and manner distressed and shocked her, but still her good sense prevented her sinking into despair, or uttering useless and violent reproaches. Some plan of action she felt was immediately necessary ; she knew that at a public inn no danger could be apprehended, she therefore pleaded not for mercy at his hands, nor with tears of weakness played the weeping heroine in distress ; but, assuming a composure she could not feel again, commanded Sir George Sinclair to leave the room.

“ By all that’s sacred I will not leave you,” he replied, “ unless you give me your solemn promise to meet here in the morning !”

“ The presumption of your request excites my contempt ;” and, resolutely breaking from him, she pulled the bell with violence.

On the waiter keeping the door open

for orders, she saw through a half closed door on the opposite side of the house, a gentleman and lady sitting at supper, both apparently advanced in years, and as far as she could judge, highly respectable in their appearance. Decision followed the reflection of a moment; she immediately passed her astonished companion, and surprised the gentleman and lady by her very abrupt entrance into their apartment.

Without giving them time for unfavourable conjectures, she implored their pardon and protection; and, in as brief a manner as possible, related the occasion of her present distress; and they, won by the innocence of her countenance, and the simplicity of her manner, encouraged her to confide in them.

Emily thought herself fully justified in disclosing Sir George Sinclair's name, and that of herself and friends; but no sooner had the name of Sinclair passed her lips, than a death-like paleness overspread the

countenance of the lady. Her husband observing it, said—"My dear woman, be composed; useless retrospections may unfit us for the duty we are called upon to perform." Then, turning to Emily, he continued, "My dear young lady, Sir George Sinclair is a bad enemy to contend with. A few lines from me to him, will probably ensure his immediate departure." The good man passed his hand across his eyes, as if wishing to suppress the emotion he felt, and wrote as follows:—

To Sir George Sinclair.

"When I consider I am addressing the destroyer of my children, I wonder that I am nerved with sufficient strength to hold with him any intercourse; but in the cause of innocence how resolute is the mind of man! The victim of your present pursuit rests safely under my protection. I need not warn you to avoid my presence; hardened as you are in vice and

iniquity, you could not meet the man you have so greatly injured.

“ FRANCIS LEICESTER.”

“ This note, my dear young Lady, will free you from farther molestation ;” and having given it to the waiter to carry to Sir George Sinclair, all parties began to feel something like composure. Emily explained every particular of her situation, and plans for the following day were decided upon.

Dr. Leicester was a respectable clergyman, who had just arrived with his Lady at Harwich, that she might pass some time with her brother's family, who lived in its vicinity, but arriving too late to venture farther that evening, they had determined to sleep at the inn, and proceed to her brother's house in the morning. Dr. Leicester only intending to stay one day, being obliged to return to town on very particular business ; but, prompted by the

exigency of the case, it was resolved that Mrs. Leicester should go to her brother's alone, and Emily be conducted to town by her venerable protector. On the following morning, therefore, they began their journey, when, at the worthy man's desire, Emily repeated every thing which had occurred since the time of her leaving school; and they, at length, agreed that she should go immediately to her friends the Fitsmortons.

"And always remember," said the good doctor, "that the chance, or whatever we may please to call it, has made us acquainted with one another; it will be the studious wish of Mrs. Leicester and myself, to cultivate a mutual and permanent regard. When you know us, you will know, that though cheerfulness, through the medium of faith and resignation, is encouraged in our minds, we have tasted the bittercup of affliction and disappointment."

Emily's looks solicited a fuller explanation: he continued,—

“ Your sympathizing countenance shall be my best excuse for dwelling on my own misfortunes, and should a parent's wrongs, a parent's griefs, touch your heart, whilst I appreciate your sensibility, I will endeavour not to tax it too frequently by useless and unavailing complaints.

“ We were blessed with two children, who gave every promise of future perfection. They were educated under the parental roof, till the proficiency of my boy in all that youth could learn, obliged me to send him to Oxford, to complete his studies, and to fit him for the sacred duties of the profession he was intended for. My girl, lovely, elegant, and accomplished as a mother's invaluable instructions could make her, was our present comfort and our future hope. In an evil hour, my son introduced Sir George Sinclair as his friend, his patron, and his best beloved companion ; and he soon became a welcome visitor at our cheerful board.

My wife, anxious for the future happiness of her girl, began to fear there was more attention than sincerity in the behaviour of our guest, and we were prudently planning her absence at the periods we had reason to expect him, when an unequivocal declaration of honourable sentiments in Louisa's favour, ensured to him an unlimited confidence. He gained her affections, he even had been urgent for the necessary preparations for their union, and he left her to mourn in hapless despair his apostacy and deceit. The bloom faded from her cheek, the lustre of her eye was dimmed, and she was fast falling a sacrifice to the grief which oppressed her, when her brother rashly, but secretly, resolved to reason with the man who had destroyed her peace; and if he refused to do her justice, to call him to that account which custom has so fatally authorised."

This gay deceiver, who had so long

abused the sacred rights of hospitality, trifled with my poor boy's appeal to justice and honour; and even dared to hint, that though an unfortunate dependence on a capricious uncle was the ostensible obstacle, yet his change of sentiments in some measure originated in the levity of my Louisa's temper. Had you known her, Miss Grosvenor, how widely would you have discriminated between levity of temper and the innocent vivacity of hers!

“ Despicable cowardice! he would have sheltered himself in the labyrinth of deceit; and cast the error on one whose only fault was loving too well the man she should have despised for ever! High spirited, warm in the defence of an injured sister, my son indignantly gave him the appellation of liar. A challenge ensued, and Henry fell by the bullet of his antagonist! We had yet another afflictive task to go through—Louisa drooped and died! She had not fortitude to bear up under

her own disappointment, the misfortune of her brother's death, and her parents' sorrow.

"You can now, my dear young Lady, account for Mrs. Leicester's emotion when Sir George Sinclair's name was mentioned. As a christian I endeavour to forgive him; but as a father, I must ever feel and remember, 'that such things were;' and that he was the destroyer of my children."

Emily's sympathy spoke forcibly to his heart, and a conversation then ensued, wherein the excellency of her understanding, and the pertinacity of her remarks, both pleased and surprised the worthy doctor. She was no less delighted with him, whose paternal counsels contributed to soothe and to prepare her mind for the trials which yet awaited her. "Oh! my dear Sir," she at length exclaimed, "what are my perplexities when compared with a mother's apostacy from rectitude! The God you encourage me to

trust in, will enable me to clear my own character from every undeserved imputation. I have friends into whose hearts I shall again be received ; and the consciousness of not having intentionally erred, will prove my best support.—But, my mother ! my poor mother ! where will she find comfort ?”

“ My dear Miss Grosvenor,” he replied, “ I acknowledge you have reason for uneasiness : the frailties of a parent fall doubly severe upon the child ; but be comforted with the thought, that you will on every occasion perform your proper duty, and leave to the Disposer of all events the elucidation of futurity.”

Emily bowed in silent acquiescence ; and if her mind now and then wandered, in conjecturing what were Edward Fitsmorton’s sentiments on her conduct, it might proceed from the *friendship* and *esteem* she had ever professed for him.

CHAP. IV.

To attempt to describe Mrs. Grosvenor's rage, indignation, and disappointment, at Emily's supposed elopement with Sir George Sinclair, were impossible ! Every unfeminine expression which ungoverned passion could suggest, fell from her lips : till exhausted by her own violence, she was conveyed senseless to her bed ; and when sufficiently recovered to see Lord Sedley, resolutions of revenge on one side, and vows of eternally abandoning Emily to her fate on the other, by giving vent to their feelings, in some measure, subdued their violence. So well did Mrs. Grosvenor play her part, in lamentations for the depravity of an only child ; so pathetically did she exclaim, " My dear, dear Lord, who would be a mother ? " that he was duped by her artifices, and for a moment debated, whether the

mother was sufficiently attractive to compensate for the loss of the daughter.

Mrs. Grosvenor's associates mournfully condoled with her on her disappointment; some of them privately declaring, that they thought Sir George Sinclair had made a good exchange; and though reprobating the conduct of Emily, all thought the affair might blow over, if she returned Lady Sinclair; and that Lord Sedley had better console himself with the Dowager.

Mrs. Grosvenor had not missed the letter in Emily's possession, but her own conscience convinced her she could not long maintain the appearance of respectability in the world. Her fortune was squandered, and the depravity of her character only screened by the veil with which deception sometimes favours the votaries of vice and folly; and therefore the finger of scorn had only pointed, not permanently marked her, as an object of infamy.

Sir George Sinclair had pleased her

fancy, and marriage appeared the most successful card to ensure her continued rank in society, and the loss of him, more than the conduct of Emily, filled her bosom with indignant disappointment. Emily she determined to cast off for ever; and when she became calm enough for reflection, she did not think it impossible but that Lord Sedley might, from motives of pique and passion, offer her his hand. This thought once encouraged, every art and blandishment, every delicate attention she so well knew how to affect, flattered his vanity, and soothed his irritated mind. She would hardly permit him to quit her presence; also pretending that his consolations were necessary to her present peace and her future comfort; and by artfully fanning the flame of resentment in his bosom, she hoped to turn it to her own purposes and advantages.

Sir George Sinclair, on Emily's sudden escape from her room, was following her

report with contemptuous silence, secretly resolving to make every possible enquiry on the subject. Miss Fitsmorton often repeated, "that Emily could not be guilty of such shameful conduct;" and her father made his appropriate remarks, at the same time, coolly asking Mrs. Fitsmorton,— "What excuse she could now make for her immaculate favourite?"

When Edward Fitsmorton called at Mrs. Grosvenor's house, the door was opened by the servant who had attended the fugitives to the stage, and in reply to the request of speaking with Miss Sandford, he answered, "Sir, the ladies have given particular orders to be denied to all company. My lady is in fits, (the man could hardly prevent a laugh) because Miss Grosvenor has eloped with her handsome husband that was to be."

Edward staggered against the door, but with as much composure as he could assume, he said.

“ I fancy there is some mistake in this business.”

“ Mistake !—No, no, Sir,” replied the man, “ there is no mistake, I’ll assure you ; for I saw them with my own eyes get into a hackney-coach, and Miss Grosvenor appeared quite composed, only a little pale or so ; and when Sir George put her into the Harwich stage, she shook hands with him quite in good humour ; and then I helped him on with a horseman’s coat, that he might ’tend her on the outside of the coach. All this is quite true, I do assure you, Sir ; besides they have been such good friends lately, and I and my fellow servants have thought it very extraordinary that Miss Grosvenor should so often have admitted Sir George to her dressing-room, when she would not never see Lord Sedley.”

“ Damnation !” exclaimed Fitsmorton.

“ No offence, Sir, I hope, I dare say by this time Miss Grosvenor is Lady Sin-

clair, and Sir George is such a generous-hearted gentleman, that—”

Edward interrupted him, and endeavouring to recover his composure, he said, “He would call on the ladies at some future opportunity.” Oppressed with feelings almost indefinable to himself, he entered a coffee-house, and there rumour, with her hundred tongues, was spreading the news of the day. Some of Sir George Sinclair’s acquaintance were lounging away a morning hour, and in the course of conversation remarked on the advantage he had gained, in taking the daughter instead of the mother, “True,” replied one, “but he will not by the exchange be overburthened with the needful ; and as beauty soon grows ‘familiar to the lover,’ he had acted with more discretion if marriage with the young lady were entirely out of the question. We all know what sort of a school Mrs. Grosvenor’s house must have proved to youth and inexperience.”

Edward had began a letter to his friend and fellow collegian, Alfred Granby : he crushed the paper into his pocket, and sought refuge in his own house from the agitation which oppressed him : but particular business requiring he should give attention to the letter, he thus concluded it :—

“ Alfred, the subject I now unwillingly enter upon, has affected me most unaccountably, but lives there a human being who can patiently become the dupe of his own deliberate judgment ? If simplicity of manners, united with stability of mind ; if beauty, adorned with all that education could bestow ; if a countenance, which spoke the feelings of an unsophisticated heart, were calculated to deceive ! I may stand excused for having been this willing dupe to such apparent perfections. I should feel the same was my sister's honour and decorum of conduct in question.”

Miss Grosvenor has eloped with Sir

George Sinclair, her mother's intended husband! she on the eve of marriage with another! To comment on this dereliction from propriety can now little avail! Did I not say I loved her as a sister? of what use is it now to declare, that there have been times when the image of Emily Grosvenor has so floated on my imagination, that I have thought it not impossible but that she might hereafter supply to me the angel I have lost, and become the mother and protectress of my child. I am formed for domestic habits, but I am not insensible to the influence of unexpected temptations. This perhaps is only the weak excuse of erring humanity, and I feel the humiliation of such a confession.

“ I now shall never meet with a mind equal to that of my lamented wife's: she tempered the volatility of mine, by the judgment, sense, and mildness of her own. My welfare, my honour, and my fortune, were sacred deposits in her hands.

How inconsistent is the human mind ! led from the feelings of the moment to indulge in an eulogium on this departed angel, when I have so forcibly confessed my disappointment at Emily Grosvenor's deception of character. But thus all visionary prospects end ! and the being my fancy had exalted as a counterpart of the lovely mother of my child, sinks on a level with the weakest, I had almost said, with the most contemptible of her sex.

“ I have had some serious thoughts of entering into the army. Emily Grosvenor, I confess, has made me ponder on the subject. My father's objections I should certainly have endeavoured to overcome ; with my mother I might have had a harder trial. Mature reflection shall now determine my mind. Granby, I must have some end in view, some point to vary the monotony of existence. I cannot lounge in Bond-street all the morning, or ride in the Park to shew my horses, and

eternally frequent the haunts of dissipation. To trifle thus with time surely is not consonant with the energetic faculties of man !---Alas ! why has fate deprived me of the blessings of domestic happiness !

“ I am yours, faithfully,

“ EDWARD FITSMORTON.”

Edward dined at his father's house ; his sister was inconsolable, Mrs. Fitsmorton studiously silent on the painful subject ; and her husband took every opportunity to reprobate the folly and indiscretion of Emily's conduct. Edward added not to the aggravation of the moment by the confirmation of her elopement ; but Miss Fitsmorton had been herself to Mrs. Grosvenor's house, had seen Emily's own maid, and felt that her exculpation was impossible.

After dinner, Mary involuntarily exclaimed,

“ I am sure Emily will write to me.”

"The less intercourse between you the better," replied her father.

Thus silenced, she sat ruminating on Emily's conduct; and in mere vacuity of mind, when she had dispatched the duties of the tea-table, she began to search the work-box for employment. An unfinished purse of Emily's netting caught her attention, it was designed as a present for Edward. She significantly held it up to his view, and fancied that his countenance changed at this testimony of Emily's attention; but he immediately challenged his mother to a game of piquet; and Mr. Fitsmorton took up a book, apparently engaged in its subject.

All parties were soon interrupted by a loud knock at the door, but having given particular orders to be denied to company that evening, they feared not the intrusion of visitors.

A light step was heard upon the stairs, the drawing-room door was opened pre-

cipitately, and Emily Grosvenor stood before them : with the tremulation of inquietude, but with a countenance of conscious innocence, she fell upon Mary's bosom, and could only articulate, " Now I am again happy." Her dark-coloured riding-habit seemed to give new delicacy to the beauty of her complexion, anxiety had increased the roses on her cheeks ; and experiencing a feeling like the sense of suffocation, she took off her hat, at once displaying the redundancy of her auburn hair, and appeared one of the loveliest figures nature ever formed. Mary's emotions were audible, but too incoherent for expression. Mrs. Fitsmorton looked at her in painful surprise.

Edward, hardly trusting to the evidence of his senses, hastily approached her, and only said,

" Do we, indeed, see Miss Grosvenor returned ?"

" More probably," cried Mr. Fitsmor-

ton, "at least more to be desired is it, that we should see Lady Sinclair. To what fortunate circumstance are we so soon indebted, Madam, for the honour of a visit?" gazing rudely in her agitated countenance.

Little Mary, who had been playing quietly in the room, somewhat relieved Emily's embarrassment, by running up to her, and expressing every feeling of infantine joy, entreating to be kissed and loved by her own dear Emily, at the same time calling her very naughty, for having gone away for so long a time.

Emily, overcome by fatigue and the variety of emotions which at once assailed her, burst into tears, and silence for a few minutes ensued.

Mrs. Fitsmorton, in the voice of compassion, bade her "take time to compose her spirits; that appearances were certainly much against her; that she should

be glad to have her sudden and unexpected return properly accounted for."

Emily, after having fondly caressed the child, met the scrutinizing eyes of her friends with dignified composure; and, turning towards Mrs. Fitmorton, she proudly exclaimed,---

"If there's a God in heaven, I am innocent!"

Her solemn and forcible appeal reached every heart, Mr. Fitmorton's excepted. He congratulated her on outwitting her mother's intentions, but feared she would find some difficulty in reconciling her to so reasonable an exchange.

Edward, hurt at his father's inhumanity, said :

"Let us recollect, Sir, that the greatest culprit is entitled to justification, and I have little doubt, but that Miss Grosvenor—"

His voice faltered, he hesitated, he re-

collected the man-servant's evidence of her elopement, and in silence traversed the room, though evidently in much perturbation of mind.

Emily had recovered her fortitude, and looking at Edward for a moment, as if she would say, Do you also condemn me? she replied: "After the sacred appeal I have dared to make to the Almighty, I trust that a brief but plain statement of facts will convince my once parental friends of my innocence."

Edward breathed with difficulty; Mary pressed her hand in silence; and she then proceeded to give an account of all that had passed, and explained the motives which induced her to seek Mrs. Mason's protection. 'The unvarnished tale of truth' pressed conviction on the minds of all. Mrs. Fitsmorton embraced her with maternal affection, whilst Mary, sobbing like a child, could only say:

“How could she be suspected of any unworthy conduct!” Edward, abashed by the suspicions which had disturbed his mind, imprecated curses on the man who had attempted to deceive Emily Grosvenor. In short, some time necessarily elapsed before she could continue to narrate the more minute parts of her little history, or mention the kind consideration of Dr. Leicester, who purposely had permitted her to plead her own cause, convinced of its success from the lips of innocence and truth. He had accompanied her in the chaise to Mr. Fitsmorton’s door, promising to be with her in the morning, to introduce himself to her friends, and to talk over plans for her future welfare and happiness. And now, how forcibly, how bitterly did her mother’s conduct recur to her mind! She truly guessed that the Fitsmortons were no strangers to its notoriety; and when she retired to rest, the subject being delicately led to by Mary, a conver-

sation ensued, which, in a great measure, prevented that quiet repose her harassed mind so much required.

“ Ah ! Mary,” she said, “ were my mother like yours, how happy had been my lot ! You can rest with confidence on a mother’s bosom, in any distress or perplexity. You can never fear her severity, even from the confession of any youthful folly.” — Such an attachment is surely the height of human friendship !

Mary wept bitterly, which Emily attributing to recent occurrences having overpowered her weak and dejected spirits, she wished her friend good-night, and then sought in sleep an oblivion of all her anxieties.

CHAP. V.

DR. LEICESTER'S visit in the morning would have fully corroborated Emily's simple story, had there required any proof of its veracity ; but she was again received to the hearts of her friends, and by so respectable a protection contradicted the reports which were circulating to her disadvantage. Dr. Leicester took leave of her with parental regard, and repeated his earnest wishes that their acquaintance, though so hastily commenced, might end in a long continuance of friendship and affection ; nor would he be satisfied till Emily had promised to pay a visit at the rectory, as soon as convenient to herself, after the return of his wife from Harwich.

Emily wrote to her mother a full exculpation of any deliberate intention of eloping with Sir George Sinclair, ex-

pressing the most delicate and dutiful wishes to be admitted to her presence. Mrs. Grosvenor answered the letter in such terms of abuse, and with so many protestations of abandoning her for ever, accusing her of the most criminal duplicity of conduct, that Emily sunk, for a time, under the disgrace which she fancied awaited her, by her mother's apostacy from virtue and decorum ; and too soon every presage of Mrs. Grosvenor's unworthiness was fatally accomplished. She saw the approach of the inevitable ruin of fortune and of character ; and as she could not, with every exertion of art, entrap the wary peer into marriage, she, at length, accepted his protection, as a companion for his continental tour ; stipulated that she might bear his name ; and left the country, glorying in the luxuries and comforts, in the splendour and eclat, which the rank and affluence of Lord Sedley would ensure to her.

Emily now, indeed, required the utmost efforts of fortitude to support her shocked and distressed mind ; and what she never before had seriously considered, poverty and dependance were becoming her undeserved portion.

To Mrs. Fitsmorton she seriously opened her heart, modestly ; but resolutely, declaring she would pursue some respectable occupation, to secure to herself the bread of independence.

Mrs. Fitsmorton applauded these laudable resolutions, but with every affectionate argument she endeavoured to persuade her to remain in town some time longer, and then to pay her promised visits to Mrs. Mason and to Dr. Leicester, by such an arrangement, time and consideration would more properly determine her future plans.

Maria Sandford added to Emily's distressing feelings, by calling one morning, and overwhelming her with invectives.

against Mrs. Grosvenor's proceedings? "And now," she continued, "now, what have I got for all my patient endurance of her caprices and follies? Not one farthing has she ever offered me since I have been in the house---Such dissipation and extravagance I have been witness to!---In truth, I might have foretold her ruin! The goods of the house are seized, and she has cruelly left me in a scene of desolation; and left you, her only child, to misery and want!-- Oh! could I ever have thought that any one of our family would have thus disgraced themselves!-- A kept mistress! merciful heaven! But you are pale and ill, Emily. I am sure I did not mean to distress you."

Mrs. Fitsmorton interfered, and recommended patience and resignation to Miss Sandford.

Emily, recovering her spirits, said, "It is my earnest request that you, Maria, will never mention my mother's name to me,

unless you can do so with moderation and patience. My best advice now is, that you immediately return to your uncle's house; that you endeavour to forget the past; for remember, it is the great criterion of a liberal mind to sink in oblivion irremediable injuries."

Miss Sandford absolutely cried from vexation at the idea of leaving London, and recapitulated the various hardships she should endure in her uncle's large and troublesome family; but it were unnecessary to dwell minutely on this subject. Maria was, at length, persuaded to return to her uncle, and the generosity of Mrs. Fitsmorton fully satisfied all her pecuniary necessities.

Emily's mind was naturally a strong one, and when the first tumult of distress and disappointment had subsided, she suppressed her wishes for solitude, and endeavoured, by constant employment, to check the emotions of sensibility, which

are only uncontrollable by an erroneous indulgence.

Mrs. Fitsmorton urged her to accompany the family to the theatre and the opera, and to join the respectable society of their friends ; kindly, but delicately suggesting, that such a line of conduct was the only method to silence the voice of calumny.

Edward Fitsmorton was now their constant attendant. Every kind attention that friendly love could devise, was sedulously offered by him. Books, music, drawing, all species of amusement which could beguile her of distressing reflections, were selected for Emily Grosvenor.

Mr. Fitsmorton was, perhaps, a keener observer than his morose habits indicated. He had of late fancied he saw an unwarrantable partiality between the young people; and even taxed his wife for encouraging it; at the same time hinting, that he thought Emily was living in idleness, when she ought to be anxious for some

occupation. Mrs Fismorton dared not support her favourite as she wished to do, knowing that to exasperate by contradiction, was not the plan to pursue. She, therefore, mildly listened to her husband's illiberal reflections, and endeavoured to palliate the circumstances from whence they originated. But soon a trifling incident which occurred at the theatre again aroused his suspicions, and eventually brought on an explanation of Edward's sentiments. In the middle of the last act of the play, some young men had nearly forced themselves into the box where the Fismortons were sitting, and were rudely gazing at, and remarking Emily Grosvenor. Edward endeavoured to subdue the impetuosity of his feelings. One of them continued to hold the door in his hand, notwithstanding many repetitions of—"Shut the door," from the interior of the box. At length Edward stood up, and in a commanding tone, again called out, "Shut the door."

This produced an imperious answer from one of the most intoxicated of the young men; and, though little in a condition either to argue or to fight, he attempted the one, and talked of the other.

Emily said, in a low voice, "Edward, be moderate, for the sake of those that love you."

Fascinated by her voice and manner, he stooped to whisper something tender and conciliating, when one of the intrusive party called out to know "who it was that disturbed the audience?"

Before Edward could reply, Mrs. Fittmorton, with infinite presence of mind, turned round to the questioner, and said, "Sir, it was at my request that the door was so frequently desired to be shut."

The gentleman who last spoke, and who appeared to be the least inebriated of the party, bowed; and immediately answered:

"A lady's request can never be unattended to;" and, whispering to his vio-

lent companion, they suddenly left the box, to the great comfort of Emily. Edward had ascertained that the intruders were some of Sir George Sinclair's companions, and jealous of Emily's consequence and honour, it was with much difficulty he could persuade himself to let them depart in peace.

Mr. Fitsmorton had been a watchful observer of this scene, and the next day he seriously expostulated with Mrs. Fitsmorton for so long detaining Emily in the family, again taxed her with having encouraged Edward's nonsensical preference of a girl so situated. Of course, she denied the charge, and declared, that she believed Emily had little suspicion that she was the object of their present altercation.

"Yes," he satirically answered, "a very likely story that she cannot perceive what is so evident to others. Your sex are generally d——d clear-sighted upon

these occasions. A fine settlement for life—a fine salvo for all the disgrace her mother brings into her family would be a marriage with mine ! By heavens ! Madam, though you know how much I love my son, I would be estranged from him for ever, rather than consent to such a degradation !”

Here Mrs. Fitsmorton, irritated by her husband's manner, and warm in Emily's favour, endeavoured to controvert his illiberal ideas, and even ventured to hint Mrs. Grosvenor's depravity could never disgrace her daughter.”

The gathering storm was bursting into words. Mr. Fitsmorton told her that he was more and more convinced she had abetted and encouraged an attachment so detrimental to the happiness of his family, and was proceeding to farther violence of language, when Edward, who had been in the adjoining drawing-room, involuntarily heard the cause of their dispute.

He now entered, and being rather roughly accosted by his father on the subject, he replied :

" Had you, Sir, openly and candidly spoken to me instead of thus accusing my mother, my answer would have been prompt and decisive. But before we investigate the affair, permit me to assure you that she is entirely innocent of your undeserved accusations. My dear mother," he continued, " let me lead you to your dressing-room," affectionately kissing her, " my father and I shall best discuss this subject alone." So saying, he with gentle force conducted Mrs. Fitsmorton to her apartment, and then returned to the drawing-room.

" You carry all things with a high hand, Sir," was his father's first ungracious remark.

" I am at a loss to comprehend your meaning, Sir."

"It is very evident to me that Emily Grosvenor and you are mutually attached."

Edward bowed—"Sir, you much rejoice me by this intelligence; for I take heaven to witness, I knew not of Miss Grosvenor's enchanting preference."

"No prevarication, Sir, do you not intend to make her your wife?"

"I will be very candid in my answer. When first I became acquainted with Miss Grosvenor, I was suffering from disappointment and affliction; her artless attentions excited my gratitude, and her society could alone arouse the faculties of my mind into action. I thought I should ever love her as a sister, though even then she sometimes reminded me of the angel I had lost. I will be sincere enough to confess, that I knew not the extent of my regard, until I thought she had eloped with Sir George Sinclair. I endeavoured to despise the indiscretion and frivolity of

her character, yet the agitation of my feelings convinced me how much I lamented her apostacy from decorum, and that time alone could restore serenity to my mind.

When she appeared before us, radiant in virtue and in truth ! who can comprehend emotions I experienced ; they were even undefinable to myself !

“ Since this period, Sir, I have daily witnessed her manifold perfections, and were I assured of her regard, it might be the means of forming my yet unsteady character.”

“ Then my surmises are just ; but, by heaven ! I will never consent to so ill-judged, so disgraceful an union ! Ally yourself to depravity ! to a woman who, however infamous in her conduct, is still the mother of Emily Grosvenor !”

“ Recollect, Sir, it is the daughter, not the mother, I would marry. There never was a purer mind than Emily Grosvenor’s,

nor can she fail to be respected, standing firmly on the basis of her own intrinsic merit.' She appears to be every thing the heart of man can wish."

"This is very high-flown language, lover-like expressions indeed! And I am then to understand that this paragon of perfection is to be received into our family? to the destruction of the hopes I had encouraged, that if ever you married again, you would give us a respectable daughter in the person of *Jemima Travers*?"

Stung with indignation at his father's manner, and fearful of answering him improperly on the subject, he said,

"We will, if you please, defer the conversation. I wish to be accessory to your happiness; but, in justice to myself, I must claim the privilege of also consulting my own. The lady you have mentioned can never be my wife. My

future fate must rest upon the determination of Emily Grosvenor herself."

He then left his father, too much agitated to meet his mother or Emily, and though he did violence to his inclination, he absented himself from his father's house for some days, not having resolution to decide his fate immediately. Love being generally full of doubt and apprehension, he as often pictured to himself Emily's refusal, as he did her assent to his proposals.

Mrs. Fitsmorton suffered much from her husband's unfeeling reproaches, at his conviction that she had encouraged her son's partiality for Emily ; who saw with pain, that her kind and friendly adviser was peculiarly unhappy. Just at this period she received a very affectionate letter from Mrs. Mason, pointing out to her a safe and respectable conveyance to Ipswich, with every persuasion that friendship could suggest to induce Emily to make her the

long promised visit. Mrs. Fitsmorton gave an unwilling consent, and every thing was soon arranged for the journey. Emily seemed to leave her heart behind her, and with many sisterly remembrances to Edward Fitsmorton, though his late absence had appeared to her very extraordinary, she tore herself from the embrace of the weeping Mary, and left London with various and distressing feelings.

When settled in Mrs. Mason's comfortable habitation, the image of Edward Fitsmorton would intrude ; she even avowed to her own heart, that she loved him as a brother, and esteemed him as friend ; and felt hurt that he had absented himself from his father's house for some days, without any ostensible reason, when he knew she was so soon to leave town ; and, at length, reasoned herself into the belief, that her disappointments and Mrs. Grosvenor's disgrace had made her society less interesting

to him than usual. Then, instantly checking such vain and useless retrospections, she sought in the casual employment and amusement of the day, relief from her oppressive and uneasy reflections. She soon began to consult Mrs. Mason on plans for her future life; that kind friend only requested that she would consider herself at home, and take time and deliberation to resolve on so important a subject.

When Edward Fitsmorton found that Emily had left his father's house during the few days of his absence, he immediately confessed to his mother and sister his future intentions, and well could he discover that nothing but Mr. Fitsmorton's unwarrantable repugnance to the match prevented their full avowal of the most unqualified approbation. He sought another conference with his father, and again they parted in dissatisfaction and anger; determined to know if Emily regarded

him as he wished, decision followed the deliberation of a moment, and throwing himself into a post-chaise, he was on the road to Ipswich without any one suspecting his intentions.

CHAP. VI.

EDWARD FITSMORTON's arrival at Ipswich was to Emily, at the first moment of their meeting, highly gratifying. Too interested on the subject nearest his heart to dwell long upon any other, he soon sought an opportunity to confess his unalterable attachment, that his future hopes of happiness depended upon her alone, and awaited in tremulous anxiety for a sincere avowal of her sentiments.

Emily's answer gave him little reason to despair; he read in her countenance the joy his unexpected presence afforded her. The delusions of hope gilded the passing hour, and they parted in the evening, anticipating a morning's conversation, when they could more fully arrange future plans of happiness. But Emily was long kept awake in tracing back their conference, and in blaming

herself for having encouraged Edward's hopes without the consent of Mr. and Mrs. Fitsmorton. She thought she had been too candid, and too unguarded in her expressions; and she felt that when her heart was so much interested, it was difficult to mark the bounds where indiscretion commences, determining, when they met in the morning, to know if Mr. Fitsmorton's consent had sanctioned the wishes of his son.

Emily's countenance, at the breakfast hour, bore the traces of anxiety, and she replied to all Edward's tender inquiries with an unusual agitation of manner. As soon as they were alone, he asked an explanation of the cause. Emily then recapitulated her waking reveries, and added:—

“ I do not retract my words, but, Edward, you must indeed be more explicit on the subject. Consider the peculiarity of

my situation ; a mother's disgrace hanging over me ! I should have deferred my partial avowal in your favour, till convinced that all your family were equally unprejudiced. In one word, what are your father's sentiments ? Does he wish—at least, does he approve of your intentions ?”

“ Dear Emily, am I to sacrifice all that can endear existence if his prejudices are not to be overcome ? My mother will glory in my choice ; she will consider you as a blessing and an ornament to her family. Mary is already the sister of your hearts and my child, though now too young to appreciate the advantages she will receive, will hereafter convince you of her gratitude.”

“ Hold not out such flattering prospects to my view—tempt me not to act unworthily—I will never receive your addresses without Mr. Fitzmorton's approbation.”

“ Emily, I have mistaken your cha-

racter; I thought you a lovely disinteresting being, whose heart throbbed in unison with mine, who—”

She interrupted him, saying: “This is, indeed, too much, and nothing but the consciousness of not deserving your unkindness can meliorate the acuteness of my feelings. I have, perhaps, been imprudent in prematurely confessing my regard for you, but judge of its sincerity, when I say, I cannot retract it! and if your father consent to our union, I could look forward to every prospect of felicity.”

Edward earnestly wished to persuade her that his father would very soon be reconciled to their marriage; that he himself was sufficiently independent to secure to her all the comforts, if not the luxuries, of life; and that he had once thought—‘An elegant sufficiency’ would content a mind resting on a firmer basis for happiness than on the tinselled pageantry which riches might command. Notwith-

standing all the sophistry of his persuasions, Emily remained firm and decisive, and they parted in that species of sorrowing anger which lovers have a thousand times felt, and a thousand times overcome. Before Edward reached London, he repented of the harshness of his behaviour, and on arriving at home, he wrote a letter to Emily, soliciting her pardon for what had passed; at the same time urging her not to drive him to despair, as it might be the means of his arranging future plans, which would little accord with the happiness of either party.

In answer to which letter, Emily wrote as follows:

To Edward Fitzmorton, Esq.

“ Would that I knew, my dear friend, in what language to soothe your mind to peace! and at the same time to convince you, that I am only swayed by delicacy and prudence, from the conviction that:

our mutual unhappiness would ensue were I now to accede to your proposals. Whatever prejudices your father has imbibed, they are the prejudices of the world, and I am persuaded that a serious breach with him would be the consequence of your marriage with me. The supposition of your independence, in every sense of the word, may lead you to imagine that this would only prove a transient regret and unhappiness. But, Edward, consider, how would the increasing misery of your mother embitter all your days! Our dear Mary too! what a task she would have to perform! The prejudices of one parent, and the grief of the other, constantly giving rise to distressing altercation. And, oh! my dear friend! all this for me! for one whose mother is marked with disgrace, who is herself suddenly become a destitute being, from unforeseen disappointment!

“ Misunderstand me not, to your noble,

your generous nature, these pleas, situated as we are, would prove irresistible claims on your heart and affections ; but never will I take advantage of such generosity ! never will I enter into your family as a suppliant and a beggar, though my heart break in the eventful struggle between duty and love ! Be convinced that your happiness is dearer to me than my own ; and also recollect what prospect in life I refuse, and what prospect I look forward to ! Exert then, dear Edward, the stability of your mind, and be assured that I shall ever remain

“ Your affectionate well-wisher
and friend,

“ EMILY GROSVENOR.”

The Answer.

To Miss Grosvenor.

“ Emily, how I envy the habitual temper of your mind ! you that can sacrifice every tender consideration to the cold

dictates of reason and of prudence ! Disappointment presses hard upon my spirits. My resolutions are irrevocably taken. I will write to you once more ; and a long adieu will probably terminate our correspondence !

“ EDWARD FITSMORTON.”

When Emily perused this letter, the first impulse of her heart would have induced her to recant the resolutions she had formed. To Mrs. Mason she confided the particulars of her situation, and with trembling impatience awaited for the advice she had requested.

Mrs. Mason said : “ The part you have to sustain is of a very perplexing and delicate nature ; but, my dear girl, you cannot weakly yield where your deliberate judgment convinces you of the fallacy of such a conduct. Mr. Fitsmorton has written to you in great trepidation of spirits ; trust me, when this is past, you

will rise higher in his esteem ; that you have really acted from principle, not to be shaken by his blameable reproaches, or his obscure hints of the future. Recollect that the same motives, the same circumstances, still call upon you for exertion as when you last wrote to him."

Emily interrupted her : " I am ashamed that a momentary weakness should have thus prevailed. I am still the same proscribed desolate being ; too proud to steal into a family ; and where I should wider spread its domestic unhappiness, even without ensuring my own." So Emily felt, and so she thought, but the hours passed heavily on, and she looked towards the future in fearful anxiety, and on the past with unavailing regret. Mrs. Grosvenor was ever present to her mind. To think that the being to whom she owed her existence, had for ever lost all claim to respectability, was torture to her bosom ; and there were times when she felt

so degraded by her mother's conduct, that obscurity through life appeared to be the fate she ought to wish for; and she hoped that the exertions, which of necessity she would soon be compelled to make to gain her own livelihood, would prove easier in their practice than her imagination represented them.

How often does the mind, when surrounded by the blessings of prosperity, swell with proud exultation at the idea of gaining an honourable independence, by the exertions of industry, perseverance, and fortitude! and how often, when such boasted theory is reduced to practice, does it shrink from the mortifications annexed to poverty and dependence! Such is human nature! and nothing but the consciousness of acting from the dictates of a virtuous fortitude, can counteract the despondency which the gloomy prospects of poverty holds forth to those

who have possessed the comforts and blessings of an affluent fortune !

After Edward Fitsmorton had written his last short letter to Emily, he resolved to enter into the army ; and fancying his determination irrevocable, he attended his father's usual invitation to dine with apparent composure. Miss Travers was spending a few days at the house, and when seated between her and his sister at dinner-time, he even attempted something like gaiety in his conversation. Mr. Fitsmorton exulted in the thought that Edward might one day or other be sensible of Miss Travers's attractions, and all things going right in the culinary department, no passing cloud disturbed the serenity of the moment. Edward's occasional reveries were however various and unpleasant ; he already repented of the decisive letter he had written to Emily. He hoped she would relent, that she would request an

explanation of his laconic epistle ; and this vague expectation contributed to his trifling away a few days, wishing for a temporary reprieve before he executed his resolutions.

By Mr. Fitsmorton's arrangement, some tête-a-têtes were contrived between Edward and Miss Travers. Her good spirits had amused the whole family, and though she appeared of a volatile disposition, she discovered more of Mr. Fitsmorton's plans than he imagined ; and as she playfully encouraged Edward's attentions, his judgment became the dupe of his wishes ; having also been a little tutored by Mary, she resolved to come to a right explanation the next time chance or design left her and Edward together. This was very soon accomplished, and after they had settled the state of the weather and other interesting topics, Miss Travers could not suppress her risibility. Edward, some-

what discomposed, requested to know what she laughed at ?

“ At you,” was her laconic reply.

He ironically expressed his thanks.

“ It would be a great triumph,” she playfully continued, “ to relax the austerity of your countenance.”

He smiled, “ Well, I thought I possessed the power,—when do you begin to—to—pay your adoration—to the most angelic of her sex ?—Is not this a lover’s language ?”

“ Dear Miss Travers !—Your conduct is so eccentric !—How have I deserved this ridicule ?”

“ I will tell you, most sorrowful knight of despondency :—the worthy gentleman who has the honour of being your father, having taken a great fancy either to me, or to my fortune, wishes to receive both into his family ; and the most reasonable, the most honest method he can devise, is, to join you and I in wedlock’s holy bands. I do

not like the turns of your countenance, Mr. Fismorton : Surely you do not mean to refuse so prudent, so reasonable an alliance?"

" Could I for a moment suppose Miss Travers to be serious, I might perhaps ingenuously answer her. If she be only sporting with the inquietude of my feelings, I am at a loss to make her comprehend the pain she is inflicting."

" A very rational monotonous answer indeed ! I was in hopes of enjoying the glory of refusing you, Sir : but as it is all the same thing in the calendar of love, though perhaps not in that of propriety, am I to understand that you refuse to marry Jemima Travers, the acknowledged heiress of thousands, in opposition to paternal wishes, in opposition to convenience, and a long train of prudential considerations ?"

" Had I an heart to bestow—" " I cannot just now indulge you in the pathetic. You must seriously attend to me, and

believe that under the appearance of levity is concealed a very anxious and susceptible heart."

Edward, still doubtful of her sentiments, bowed, in breathless expectation of what she was about to communicate. She continued, "You are not now to be seriously told, that your father wishes an union between us to take place. Our consent, however is, I believe, still wanting. You have your secrets, I have mine, and all we have to do, is to convince him, that you and I cannot overcome our mutual antipathy."

"Dear Miss Travers! did you not promise to be very serious?"

"I protest I had nearly forgotten the promise, or rather, I wish to procrastinate, as long as possible my---my---my confession. Volatile as my temper may have appeared, how shall I tell you, Mr. Fismorton, that my affections are irrevocably engaged? You are to imagine that the

object of my regard is every thing that is good and amiable, and I am only waiting till I become of age to bestow my hand and fortune where I have every prospect of permanent felicity."

"A thousand thanks, my dear Miss Travers, for your candour and confidence; command my best services, and be assured——"

"I guess all you would say, but I am not yet quite ready to thank you for your professions; and---and---I have been thinking, that as you know my secret, whether it would be very indecorous to guess at yours?"

"Dear girl, I have no secret! my heart has lately rested on a lovely interesting being, who only bids me despair from noble, but mistaken, principles."

He then recapitulated all that had passed between himself and Emily, and they parted on terms of confidence and friendship highly interesting to both.

Miss Travers took an early opportunity to undeceive Mr. Fitsmorton, who had exultingly marked the good understanding which seemed to have taken place between her and his son. She told him that Mr. Edward Fitsmorton, having had the temerity to make her an offer of his hand, she had made him one of her best curtsies in return, and with great civility begged leave to refuse the honour. She quarrelled with him, and soothed him in a breath, maintaining her own independency of spirit, at the same time confessing her prior and unalterable attachment to another. Vexed, irritated, and disappointed, that this favoured aggrandisement of his family was for ever frustrated, the gloomy austerity of his temper seemed daily to increase, and Mrs. Fitsmorton often secretly lamented the domestic inquietude she experienced. Edward had not acquainted her with his intention of entering into the army; he felt how severe the

stroke would fall on the bosom of so affectionate a mother ; and he could not help flattering himself with the hope that Emily's resolutions might be shaken.--- Again he wrote to her, and narrated all that had passed between him and Miss Travers, and after acquainting her with his military plans, he thus concluded his letter :—

“ You see, dearest Emily, my fate rests on you alone. One recanting word on your part ensures you mine for ever ! I entreat you in the most solemn manner to weigh well every circumstance, to consider how severely my mother's fortitude will be tried by my embracing a military life ; and not to let the false heroism of a moment embitter the peace of those you love : think you not that the temporary estrangement of my father's cordiality would appear light to her in comparison of, perhaps, my permanent banishment ? Oh, Emily ! What I have most to con-

tend with is the proud independency of your spirit, which cannot brook to enter into a family, because one individual of it is fatally prejudiced against the alliance ! *It is true* this individual is my father, but recollect that my spirit is equally independent with your own ; that I am of an age to claim the privilege of judging for myself, and that though I would willingly acknowledge the proper duty of a son, that I cannot be blind to the illiberal prejudices of any human being, nor submit to its trammels against the conviction of reason and deliberate judgment.

“Tell me not that the conduct of your unfortunate mother militates against your complying with my wishes ; tell me not that, reduced by misfortune and disappointment, you cannot supplicate to enter into my family. Emily, if your attachment were equal to mine, you would immediately become my wife, and secure our happiness. Why are my oft-repeated

wishes answered by the cold dictates of prudence? Oh, be assured, they cannot chill the ardour of an affection like mine! an affection which peculiar circumstances have so contributed to increase, that it can end but with my life. I seek not to persuade you by the romantic effusions of passions, but by the conviction of unbiassed reason. Consider well before you determine my fate. Let no false estimate of imaginary duty lead you to renounce for ever our mutual prospect of felicity! for have you not, my dearest Emily, acknowledged, that *Edward Fitzmorton* is not an object of indifference to you.

“Heaven bless you!”

Emily's Answer.

“The letter I have this instant received is little calculated to soothe the perturbation of my mind, or to assist me in arranging my ideas as I ought to do. Only this, my dear friend, I can now say, on

the heart-breaking subject ; that I had not determined to forego the sweetest prospect of human felicity, but from the *conviction of my deliberate judgment.*

“ I supplicate you to suspend your intentions of embracing a military life. Dear Edward, should your father relent in my favour, what a barrier to domestic happiness would you have placed ; but above all, think of your mother ! ~~think~~ how such an estrangement from the family would wound her heart, without alleviating the sorrows of your own own ! My dear friend, such a life is ill calculated for you ! How I should tremble for the health and spirits of your sister, were the anxiety of your absence added to her mind in its present dejected state ! Shall I say I can well judge of her feelings by my own ? Do not act with precipitation : Oh, that your father could read the heart of *Emily Grosvenor* ! ”

Before Edward received the above let-

ter, Mr. Fitsmorton had spoken very explicitly to him in respect to pecuniary affairs, acknowledging that Miss Travers's fortune would have been most acceptable in the family; and reverting to the romantic folly of his attachment to Miss Grosvenor. To a long lecture on this subject Edward replied:

"Miss Travers now, Sir, is quite out of the question, and perhaps it may afford you some gratification to know, that I am also refused by Emily Grosvenor! she disdains to be allied to a family wherein every individual will not receive her with joy and respect. She considers my happiness superior to her own, and by an erroneous calculation, dooms me to a life inimical to my domestic habits, and probably detrimental to my future prospects."

Mr. Fitsmorton, with all his apathy of disposition, appeared to feel the delicacy of Emily's conduct, but thinking it best to be silent on the subject, he requested

an explanation of Edward's last assertion in regard to his future plans.

" I allude, Sir, to my adopting a military life ; the army will be a sure refuge for a disappointed heart."

The expression of Mr. Fitsmorton's countenance instantly changed.

" The army ! the army ! Edward," he repeated ; " surely you cannot be serious ?"

" It is not, Sir, merely the thought of the moment, and I will be very ingenuous with you. I mean to make one more attempt to subdue Miss Grosvenor's spirited resolves, and permit my fate to be determined by her award."

Mr. Fitsmorton replied with a forced composure of manner, " If your romantic perseverance succeed, and probably it may, with an unprotected disappointed girl, bear in mind, that you, as the husband of Emily Grosvenor, must give up your father and family !" At this moment Emily's last letter was brought to Edward

Fitsmorton ; he read it in great agitation of mind ; and taking from his pocket the longer one which preceded it, he presented them both to his father, and immediately left the room.

Mr. Fitsmorton's mind was proud, obstinate, and weak, nor could he have formed an idea that Emily would act so disinterestedly. The repugnance he felt to receive her into the family, a beggar, as he termed her, stigmatized with her mother's depravity, suppressed every thought favourable to Edward's happiness ; still he loved his son, he was even proud of him ; and felt that he was the hope and ornament of the family, and the idea of his embracing a military life, was an unconquerable mortification. Agitated by the various feelings of the moment, he entered his wife's dressing-room, and without any prelude to the distressing subject, he said :
“ If you are not yet acquainted, Madam, with your dutiful son's intentions, I must

inform you he is going into the army, because I will not disgrace my family, by countenancing his union with Emily Grosvenor, who has perhaps artfully written these letters on purpose to dupe me."

Mrs. Fitsmorton, shocked and distressed at the confirmation of intelligence she had dreaded to anticipate, endeavoured to suppress her own feelings to reason with her husband on the blessing he was casting from him ; but far from being conciliated by her gentleness, and irritated by the contrariety of his own emotions, he again reproached her as being the primary cause of this domestic uneasiness, agitating himself in so violent a manner, that a sort of suffocation ensued, and he fell senseless on the floor. Medical assistance was immediately procured, and he was sedulously attended by the family during a fortnight's confinement. To prevent Emily farther inquietude, Edward and Mary both continued to write to her, avoiding to

mention the cause of Mr. Fitsmorton's illness; Edward's letters breathing tenderness and love, assuring her he had for the present suspended his military plans, but that she should be acquainted with them before they were finally determined; of course she could not divest her mind of anxiety on his account, but fancied he had relinquished all thoughts of a private marriage, and turned her mind to the idea of gaining some eligible situation in the world. Mrs. Mason had been persuaded to make many enquiries: Emily wrote herself to Dr. Leicester, stating her future intentions; and at the very moment she was consulting with Mrs. Mason, whether she should undertake the tuition of two children of quality, the post brought her the following letter from Dr. Leicester :---

To Miss Grosvenor.

“ Your account of yourself, my dear young lady, has so interested our feelings ;

your conduct so excites our admiration, that we wish to be more intimately acquainted with a mind, actuated by such laudable and disinterested principles.--

You well know how we are situated ; shall I with prompt sincerity propose to you a plan which we hope will prove beneficial to your spirits, and which we are persuaded will be highly advantageous and gratifying to us ? Mrs. Leicester and myself have never met with a human being, since the death of our lamented Louisa, of so fair a promise as yourself : one who could so well contribute to fill our bosoms' aching void, and to prove to us, in every sense of the word, a blessing from the hand of heaven ! Have you yet anticipated, my dear Miss Grosvenor, what I am about to request ? Come and try the manner of our life ; come only for one twelvemonth, during that time accede to our proposals, and afterwards we will accede to yours. Such a companion as yourself would bean

acquisition to my dear wife, and again bid her look forward to days of peace, nor are we always sad or repining at the decrees of heaven ; and to contribute to the happiness of others, is the best exhilaration of our spirits. With the most anxious impatience we shall await the result of your mature deliberation. Write us, my dear, every emotion of your heart, and that you will confer on us the requested felicity of your society, is the earnest and sincere wish of one who hopes ever to prove himself

“ Your paternal friend,

“ F. LEICESTER.”

This letter was received by Emily with a grateful heart : Mrs. Mason strongly advised her to accept so liberal and respectable a protection. All other plans were immediately suspended, and Emily answered Dr. Leicester's letter as he wished she should. Every arrangement was quickly

made, and all parties agreed, that in about a month Emily should visit the rectory, to settle every thing for her permanent residence.

CHAP. VII.

WHEN Mr. Fitsmorton was recovered from his indisposition, Emily experienced a severe trial in a visit from his son, but even the eloquence of love could not prevail. Emily had now marked the line of conduct she thought she ought to pursue; and stability of mind, strengthened by mature reflection, gave permanency to her resolutions. She entreated him to postpone going into the army for six months. She was willing to enter into an engagement never to marry, if fate prevented their union, and gave him every assurance that her present refusal did not originate in caprice or indifference. To all her gentle arguments and persuasions, he answered with impatience and disappointment; and eligible as appeared the plan of her being an inmate at Dr. Leicester's, he told her, " Still it *was* depen-

dence, and every thing contributed to the wish, that he himself should become her only protector." In short, they parted completely miserable, nor did Fitsmorton's mind at all recover its serenity, by the vain endeavour to reconcile his mother to the change of pursuit he meditated, in entering into the army; and owing to her distress of mind, he had not resolution to acquaint Mr. Fitsmorton with his final determination.

When Emily was settled with her new friends at the rectory, Edward confirmed to his father her decisive refusal to enter the family without the approbation of all parties, at the same time declaring, that he would never marry any other woman, indignantly hinting the inefficacy of Mr. Fitsmorton lamenting the effects of their mutual uneasiness, when the cause rested with him alone. Every idea of preparation, or hint of Edward's future plans, filled his father's mind with horror and de-

spair; but as obstinacy was its leading trait, he could not bring himself to give up a point, in which he fancied the dignity of his family was so materially concerned.

Edward Fitsmorton continued to write to Emily, and she answered his letters, if only to prohibit farther persuasions on a subject so distressing to both. Dr. Leicester offered to interfere, and endeavour to overcome Mr. Fitsmorton's unfortunate prejudices against her; but to this she would not consent, and could she obtain a faithful promise from Edward Fitsmorton not to think of the army for six months to come, she thought she should feel comparatively happy; but many and severe were the conflicts of her mind, to answer with resolution and propriety all his sophistical arguments to induce her to elope with him. The step was so repugnant to the delicacy of her feelings, the peculiar situation Mrs. Grosvenor had

exposed her to, forbid the pleadings of her heart in favour of a man she so truly loved, and she trusted to time and circumstances for her being honourably received into his family. Mary's letters were her great comfort and support, but never could Emily account for the extreme dejection of her friend's spirits. 'Tis true she partook of the amusements suited to her age, but Emily knew that Mary's heart little participated, and was very rarely interested, in scenes of gaiety and cheerfulness. Often had Mrs. Fitsmorton lamented to her this indifference and apathy of disposition, but neither could guess the probable cause of such habitual melancholy. Soon, however, the attention of the family was aroused and excited, by the apparent indisposition of Edward Fitsmorton, and they began to fancy that consumptive habits were already undermining his constitution. Mrs. Fitsmorton, with all the inquietude of maternal love, marked the

progress of his disorder ; weak and timid, when exertion was necessary, on her own account, but resolute in a cause which seemed to threaten a serious affliction to all, she insisted on immediately calling in medical advice, and wrote privately to Edward's friend, Alfred Granby, entreating his presence as soon as possible. She narrated every circumstance of her son's attachment to Emily Grosvenor, and expressed her hopes that all parties might yet be conciliated by proper and seasonable advice. Alfred Granby answered her letter in person ; and Fitzmorton appeared transiently revived by his society ; talked of arranging every thing for the commencement of his military career, with the forced gaiety of a despairing heart. The physician who attended him warmly reprobated his intentions, and instigated by Granby, very seriously expostulated with Mr. Fitzmorton on the risk his son would be exposed to, by em-

bracing a line of life so inimical to his health and spirits; observing that his disorder proceeded from anxiety and disappointment, and that the consequences might prove fatal, if his mind remained in so disquieted a state. Alfred Granby seconded the probability of the doctor's predictions, and Mr. Fitsmorton, appalled by such melancholy representations, shocked at the pallid countenance and the alteration he could not help acknowledging in the person of his son, at last yielded his unwilling consent, and said, "that if Edward would give up all thoughts of the army, and at the end of six months if he still wished that Emily Grosvenor should become his wife, he would endeavour so to arrange his affairs that pecuniary inconveniences should be averted; secretly hoping, that in the space of six months some fortunate circumstance might intervene to prevent the union; and he soon repented that he had not stipulated for a

longer period of probation. But the joy of the moment beamed on every countenance, whilst returning hilarity of spirits seemed already to presage a permanent restoration of Fitsmorton's health.

By Miss Travers's address and management, Mr. Fitsmorton was prevailed on to write a few lines to Emily, and as dispatch is generally in unison with love, blessed with so invaluable a credential, Edward could hardly wait the finishing of his mother's and sister's letters, and gaily bidding them farewell, he and his friend, Alfred Granby, were soon travelling on the road to Hertfordshire.

Emily had been apprised of Edward's indisposition; anxiety magnified her apprehensions, and could she have followed the natural impulse of her heart, it would have prompted her to have attended him in the hour of sickness; and, notwithstanding the stability of her mind, she often wept in secret at the prospect of her fu-

ture fate, and sometimes doubted whether her scruples were not leading her far, very far, from the path of happiness ; but the estrangement of Edward Fismorton from the bosom of his family, and the misery this would ensure to his mother and sister, the stigma which his father imagined clung to herself, on account of Mrs. Grosvenor's depravity, all contributed to strengthen the resolution she had formed, never to enter the family in a dishonourable or clandestine manner. Every solace and advice which experience and judgment could suggest, she derived from her respectable companions ; and the reflection that she was acting from the principles of rectitude and honour, frequently chased from her bosom the feelings of despair.

On the evening of a very inclement April day, the shutters being closed, and the comforts of the social tea equipage preparing, whilst Dr. Leicester was se-

lecting an entertaining book for their mutual amusement, a carriage was heard at some little distance, and soon a violent ringing at the gate announced its arrival. Emily's heart palpitated—Fitsmorton was associated with every idea—a sort of bustle in the hall, and the servant answering to some one—"Yes, Sir, quite alone," increased her involuntary alarm. The parlour door was hastily opened, a gentleman entered the room. Emily heard his name; she knew that Mr. Granby was Fitsmorton's intimate friend, and all the dark forebodings of imagination passed in momentary succession across her mind. Before Mr. Granby could prepare her for seeing Fitsmorton, she exclaimed, "My dear Sir, pray let me know the worst; suspense will only add to my misery.—Your friend is, I fear, very ill, or has he left the country?"

And before Mr. Granby could answer

these hurried questions, Fitsmorton, having recovered from a momentary faintness proceeding from the lassitude of fatigue, rushed into the room, and regardless of the astonished witnesses of his impetuosity, caught Emily to his bosom, calling her his own, his beloved girl, the arbitress of his future fate. The tide of joy which rushed through Emily's heart, allowed for a moment the unchecked rapture of her lover, but instantly suffusing her cheek with the carnation tint of modesty, she broke from his encircling arms, and endeavoured to assume some degree of composure, then observing Edward's pallid countenance, she burst into tears, and said, "My dear, why this unnecessary trial of your health and spirits?" a momentary silence ensued. At length, Granby attempted to explain the cause of their journey, and Edward, taking a packet of letters from his pocket, en-

treated Emily's serious attention to its contents, and not to consider him either a fool or a madman, causelessly to alarm her mind or agitate her spirits.

Emily, dreading a repetition of distressing arguments, took the letters in silence. Alfred Granby, who had fully explained the reason of their visit to Dr. and Mrs. Leicester, now approached Edward, and said, "Who can peruse such interesting letters, whilst there are so many witnesses to estrange attention? let us leave the ladies together; my life on it, Miss Grosvenor, will thank me with smiles in half an hour for this proposal." So saying, he took Dr. Leicester's arm, and they all three left the room. The peculiarity of Mr. Granby's manner increased the trepidation of Emily's spirits; she gazed mournfully on the eventful packet, till, at length, persuaded and soothed by Mrs. Leicester, she broke the seal of the envelope, and descried Mrs. Fitsmorton's

hand-writing. Pressing the letter to her lips, she said, " Dear and honoured friend, how I revere your goodness, and love you for every mark of your distinguished regard to me ! " Then taking up a letter, directed in Mr. Fitsmorton's hand-writing, she exclaimed, " My dear Mrs. Leicester, what can this portend ? " And ' ere she had finished reading its contents, she felt the support of Fitsmorton's arm, who had impatiently re-entered the room, unable to restrain the inquietude of his feelings, though he had apparently attended to the reasonable advice of his more reasonable companions. It may be imagined that a tête-a-tête was the consequence of his intrusion ; and when it is acknowledged that Fitsmorton thought himself the happiest, and Emily the most perfect of human beings. It may also be concluded, that the chaste timidity of genuine affection on her part, encouraged by Mr. Fitsmorton's consent to the alliance, had contri-

buted to pourtray to the lover's imagination the brightest tints of future felicity. A transitory cloud intervened, Edward's uncertain health yielded to fatigue of body and agitation of mind, but a few days confinement, and Mrs. Leicester's wholesome prescriptions, offered by the hand of Emily, proved more efficacious than medical remedies had hitherto done.

When Edward and his friend had left the rectory, Emily could hardly believe the reality of her present destiny, and the confirmation of it was frequently ascertained by the perusal of Mr. Fitsmorton's letter. To think that she should be clasped to the bosom of Edward's mother, as an esteemed and beloved daughter, that the child would be taught to consider her as the guardian of her future days; that Mary would receive her as a sister, and that in a few months a near and tender claim might unite them in the permanent bonds of affection, were the natural anti-

cipations of her mind. Yet so great was the sudden change in her prospects, that she sometimes trembled at the instability of terrestrial blessings. Dr. Leicester, who watched with parental solicitude every turn of her mind, took all opportunities to discourage such irritable feelings; and, whilst he reprobated the presumptive idea that worldly happiness was a plant of permanent duration, he wished to inculcate that the creatures of dependency could best testify their gratitude, by being satisfied with the dispensations of a bountiful and wise Creator.

“ Believe me,” he continued, “ my dear Miss Grosvenor, that experience has, in some measure, matured my judgment, and I am convinced that half the miseries of life proceed from a fastidious and perverted imagination. We often anticipate a thousand evils which are never realized, and thereby deprive ourselves of that present portion of enjoyment which might

prove a solace through the scenes of a chequered and uncertain world. Like a distant fog, which obscures the brilliancy of nature, enveloping in shade its brightest scenes, yet as the traveller approaches, the fancied gloom is vanished, and cheerful perseverance at length concludes his journey." Emily profited by such salutary counsel, and looked forward with heart-felt satisfaction to a visit from Miss Fitsmorton, with whom she was to return to London for a few weeks. Alfred Granby had long admired Miss Fitsmorton, but the reserve of her manners and her pensive disposition, had hitherto precluded an avowal of his sentiments. The temporary cheerfulness she now evinced at Emily's happiness, induced him to confide to Edward his long smothered partiality, and being assured by him that Mary's affections were disengaged, he openly paid her all those marked attentions so generally pleasing to the female mind, yet so dis-

tressing when not duly appreciated.— Mary, disdaining every species of coquetry, saw with regret Mr. Granby's partiality; she knew it was a connection her father must approve of, but determined to plead the present insensibility of her heart, if seriously urged on the subject.

Emily's reception in town was most gratifying to her feelings, and when the time of her visit expired, the utmost resolution was necessary to withdraw herself from so beloved a circle. She returned to the rectory, and had the satisfaction of returning with Edward's child for her companion.

Mr. Fitsmorton had behaved to Emily with tolerable kindness, but he could not help secretly lamenting that he had not insisted upon a longer period before the marriage should take place, and when Edward had recovered his health and spirits, he thought he had been too easily persuaded to receive Emily into the family.

These irritations of a weak mind contributed not to the improvement of his temper; and Mrs. Fitsmorton rejoiced at the approach of summer, which would take her from the circles of gaiety to scenes more congenial to her mind. Soon after the family were settled at Fitsmorton park for the season, Emily again became their guest, and in her society Edward was often reminded of the angel he had deplored, marking with peculiarity of feeling their resemblance in mind and manner.

Alfred Granby had offered his hand and heart to Miss Fitsmorton; timid and irresolute in conduct, fearing compulsion from her father, she requested that Granby would for one twelvemonth suspend any application to her family, and if at the end of that period he wished for the alliance, she would then become his wife. Alfred submitted, but not till she had as-

sured him, that no man living she could acknowledge a preferred regard. To Emily her conduct appeared inexplicable, and she pronounced her friend's determination capricious, and Granby's attachment unfortunate.

At the expiration of the six months, Edward Fitsmorton and Emily Grosvenor were united. The child brightened beneath their eye, and Emily often asked herself whether it were possible she could love one of her own children better than she did her present interesting companion. She had heard Fitsmorton observe, that the child's countenance and actions reminded him of her own mother, but Emily had in vain formerly wished to trace the features of her father, when partiality for him first struggled in her bosom.

Dr. Leicester had joined their hands ; Mrs. Mason was not forgotten. In their bridal tour they had made her a visit, and

her excellent heart was truly gratified at the prospect of the happiness her interesting pupil had every reason to anticipate.

CHAP. VIII.

SIR GEORGE SINCLAIR'S visit to his uncle proved an unfortunate one, in every sense of the word. A few days convinced him he was not the welcome guest he had hitherto been, and a few weeks confirmed some vague suspicions that his uncle's housekeeper could claim with him a very near relationship. In short, he found that they were privately married, and the sight of a male infant precluded all probability of ever reaping the fruits of his hypocritical attentions. Disgusted and wearied with their monotonous life, he prepared for a very early departure. The remembrance of Emily Grosvenor, the manner in which he had been out-witted, rankled at his heart, nor did he despair of being amply revenged for the scorn she had evinced for the offer of his hand and heart. He fancied that existence was in-

supportable without the radiant smiles of her beauty ; and his selfish ungenerous passion would gladly have reduced the object of his transient adoration to a state of disgrace and wretchedness. The evening previous to his leaving a society so uncongenial to his taste and habits, he was brought to his uncle's house in a senseless and alarming situation ; returning from a convivial, but intemperate party, in a state of intoxication, which rendered him unable to manage his horse, the spirited animal ran furiously away, and at length suddenly precipitated his unfortunate master on a heap of stones. A contusion on his head, and dislocation of his arm, were the consequences. The horse galloped home, which alarmed the family. Humanity prompted a strict search for the rider, who was found at some distance from his uncle's house, whither he was carefully conveyed, and a surgeon was immediately sent for, but many months

elapsed before he could be pronounced free from danger. The contusion had affected his intellects, and in this deplorable state he was indebted perhaps for his life, and decisively for every alleviation of pain, to the kind-hearted woman he had treated so contemptuously. She influenced his uncle to settle an annuity on him for life, and her whole conduct evinced, that the exercise of kindness and humanity is not confined to any situation of life, or dependent on the stimulative powers of education.

Mrs. Grosvenor was still in the meridian of her glory, enjoying her imaginary consequence, and deluding her companion with every act and blandishment she so well knew how to practise; the feelings of nature were so deadened in her bosom, that Emily was only thought of as an insidious usurper of her rights; and still imagining that the elopement was concerted and voluntary, she harboured every

sentiment of revenge against the man so late the object of her adoration ; and to see them both begging at her feet, would have proved a moment of the highest gratification.

Emily, amidst her own happiness, remembered her mother with painful regret, nor could she fail to anticipate, that days of sorrow, and probably of repentance, would succeed to the transient splendor of her present career. The time of Alfred Granby's probation elapsed, a dejection was still visible on Mary's countenance, but he, who only attributed it to the timidity of her nature, thought himself the happiest of men when she consented to become his wife, and sought in the bosom of retirement the comforts of a domestic life.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton appeared blessed beyond the common lot of mortals. The birth of a son augmented

their happiness, and Edward's care and attention to Emily, and fondness for the child, knew no bounds. She nursed the infant herself, which, of course, obliged her to give up promiscuous engagements, and this she dated as the happiest period of her life, passing her days more retired, and her evenings with esteemed and selected friends, or only tête-a-tête with her husband; and whilst pressing her own and Edward's child to her bosom, she acknowledged herself one of the happiest of human beings.

Mr. Fitsmorton had never entirely recovered the effects of his last illness, and his health now visibly declined. Sensible of his own danger, yet outrageous if it were hinted at by others, he became offensively impatient, and the cares and attentions of his wife and family were frequently received with fretfulness, and always with ingratitude. He grew worse, Mr. and Mrs. Granby were sent for, he

was surrounded by his family without their daring to administer those consolations his situation required. The solemnity of a death-bed must ever appal the strongest mind. In the last hours of suffering humanity, and where the senses are sufficiently acute to convince the dying how awful is the expectation of eternity! when the countenance of an affectionate wife or mother proclaims the internal struggle for resignation to heaven, when medical assistance appears of no avail, when the eventful separation of soul and body is nearly accomplished. How dark and dreary the passage to the tomb! unless the "Sun of righteousness with healing in its wings," dispels the mists of doubt, and cheers the sufferer with the glorious hope of eternal happiness!

After a few days of extreme agonies, Mr. Fismorton died in the arms of his son! Every possible attention was paid to the wishes of the deceased, and a few

months restored tranquillity and happiness to all.

Emily's felicity seemed daily to increase the affection of the husband, and the attention of the lover were most conspicuous in Fitsmorton's conduct, whilst the native sweetness of her disposition, the polish of her manners, and the cultivation of her mind, anticipated his every wish, and rendered home a scene of comfort and variety. The devotion of his time to her society, appeared ever to be the result of his own inclination, and Emily yet secluded herself from places of fashionable resort, on account of her maternal duty to her little boy ; and when Fitsmorton felt obliged from concurring circumstances to leave her at the hour of dinner, his early return in the evening was highly gratifying to her affectionate heart.

He had one day accepted some casual engagement, and towards evening Emily, as usual, expecting him home with her

accustomed solicitude, her mind naturally fell into a train of reflections, resulting from the domestic happiness she so fully enjoyed, and so truly appreciated. His well-known knock at the door aroused her from the pleasing reverie. He entered the room, and threw himself into a chair, without even his accustomed enquiries after his children, or one affectionate look to the astonished Emily.

“Are you unwell, my love?” was her first anxious question.

“Unwell?”—No,—no,—I am in the highest health and spirits imaginable.”

“Something, I am sure, has disturbed your mind, Edward. Why do you not speak to me as usual?”

“And why this strange inquietude, my most discerning love?” then advancing towards her, and grasping her hands within his own, he added, “And shall the sweet intelligence of mind, beaming on that lovely countenance, bind me *for ever* your

fond, your willing slave?" Emily was about to deprecate Fitsmorton's uncommon manner and expressions, when looking anxiously in his face, she discovered that they proceeded from the effects of wine, and instantly endeavouring to suppress her chagrin, she soothed him in the gentlest manner, permitted not a single question to escape her, only anxious that repose should restore him to every proper recollection. He then appeared to have a faint remembrance of the inconsistency of his behaviour; and, clasping her to his bosom, he said,

"Let us then, dearest Emily, again be friends." With a smile expressive of every virtue which could irradiate beauty, she replied,

"My dear Edward, were we ever otherwise? not for one moment since fate has united us, have I ever experienced for thee aught but the hallowed sentiments of affection!" And then the soothing endear-

ments of the anxious wife prevailing, he retired to rest with tolerable composure.

Emily ruminated for some little time on the scene which had passed ; but her good sense permitted her not to convert this accidental excess into a growing or a serious evil ; and she anticipated the excuses Fitsmorton would make, and the chastened expressions of love which would fall from his lips ; when reason again resumed its empire in his mind ; then supplicating the Disposer of all Events for a continuance of the blessings which surrounded her, she kissed her sleeping children, and peacefully retired to rest.

The next morning at breakfast, Fitsmorton endeavoured to rally off the subject, and Emily avoiding unnecessary gravity or wise rebukes, promoted the gaiety he wished to encourage. The entrance of the children gave a new turn to the discourse ; he fondly caressed his boy, and appeared gratified when Emily playfully

traced in the infant's countenance his own features and complexion.

"It is extraordinary, my love," she added, "that our sweet Mary bears so little resemblance to you; how often have I wished, even before I had any idea that you regarded me with partiality; how often have I wished, that your child's eyes, or mouth, or some trait of her countenance, could remind me of her father!"

"Extraordinary! did you say, Emily? Nothing is extraordinary in this world!" Then looking earnestly in the child's face, he declared, "it to be most true—too true," and impatiently ordered her to be taken out of the room.

Though gradual the change in Fitsmorton's temper and spirits, Emily thought she could trace its commencement from this period. She saw, with pain, that intemperate conviviality was becoming a refuge for some mental inquietude, the cause of which she vainly endeavoured

to discover, but she ever avoided all complaint of his conduct, which might have embittered the few domestic hours they now passed together. What a change for the susceptible, the affectionate heart of Emily; and to meet Mrs. Fitsmorton with the smile of peace, to conceal from her every anxious solicitude on Edward's account, appeared a task the most difficult to perform! Mrs. Granby was settled in a distant part of the country, and to her she could avoid all unnecessary communications. The two children just at this time unfortunately sickened with the measles, of course Emily devoted her whole attention to them. Fitsmorton evinced the fondest anxiety for his son, and even had watched some hours at the child's bed-side, when the malady appeared with unfavourable symptoms; but when little Mary a few days afterwards became an equal sufferer, he never entered the nursery or enquired about her. All this was

enigmatical to Emily; and when the children were perfectly recovered, she, with accumulating anguish, perceived that the midnight revel, and the most dissipated society, were often substituted for the rational converse of chosen friends. Surrounded with every apparent blessing, the world appeared to her a desert. The bosom on which she had heretofore rested with confidence and affection, was either wrapped in mystery, or fatally estranged from hers! and often did she feel sincerely grateful that no persuasions had induced her to listen to Fitsmorton's clandestine proposals; for had she entered the family, in her idea, so dishonourably, she thought her present misery would have been insupportable; perhaps (she mentally apostrophised) "the domestic habits I have lately encouraged are not sufficiently blended with variety for the active mind of man! I will no longer indulge my own feelings and taste, in contradiction to Edward's wishes."

Some unbidden tears fell on her cheek; but, having determined on a different line of conduct, she fervently prayed that the health of her darling boy might not suffer from a relaxation of her care and attentions. Without appearing to comment on her husband's conduct, she had been a very accurate observer, and was convinced that he often sought company abroad, more to banish uneasy reflections than to gratify a depraved inclination and taste; but that his mind should be agitated by any distress, and she not permitted to share it, was an idea that overwhelmed her with the deepest sorrow and regret; and her utmost penetration could not discover why little Mary, now of so interesting an age, was often repulsed by her father, if she attempted those little playful endearments which innocence and nature prompted.

Often had Emily heard her mother spoken of as the most lovely and amiable

of women. "Is it possible (she sometimes asked herself) that Edward is afraid to express the natural emotions of his heart, when contemplating this living image of one he had so truly mourned? She hoped he could not attribute to her any narrow or illiberal sentiments! It had ever been her uniform endeavour to court his attention to the child's infantine sayings and pursuits, which had only increased the irritation of the moment."

Emily now invited company, frequented public places, and formed those parties at home which she thought would be most pleasing to her husband. He seemed surprised at so sudden a change, and sedulously attended her, more, Emily thought, from curiosity, than from any gratification he enjoyed in such scenes of gaiety. She for some time heroically pursued this plan, but whilst surrounded with all the variety of dissipation which could fascinate the senses, her heart drooped with its con-

tending emotions, and the smile which played upon her countenance was only the deceiving evidence of her apparent happiness.

Dr. Leicester being in town, called upon Emily one morning, to request that Fitsmorton, herself, and her nursery, would visit the rectory; but when she mentioned the invitation to her husband, he proposed that she and her children should accompany the doctor into the country, but pleaded that particular business would not permit him to leave home.

This was the first time he had ever proposed even a temporary separation. She replied, "Nothing should induce her to leave town without him;" "and surely," he returned, "my dear Emily, this determination is a very childish one: your leaving London, for a short time, will afford us a little cessation from company,

for we seem lately to have lived in a crowd."

"I wish I knew what line of conduct would be most pleasing to your taste, Edward. I really thought seclusion from promiscuous society was unpleasant to you, and happy, as I ever am, in the domestic circle——"

He interrupted her, saying, "Nonsense, Emily! variety is pleasing to all, and to shine a bright constellation in the hemisphere of fashion, and rival each gay competitor of wit and beauty; in short, to run the full career of female vanity, are seductive temptations to the feeble mind of woman."

"I know not what I am to infer from this sort of language; if to love you beyond all human beings, if to vary the tenor of my life to give zest and variety to yours, nay, even to neglect my maternal duties for the higher ones; af-

fection for you suggests :—is to be guilty of vanity and folly, then am I the trifling character you have endeavoured to describe.”

“ I doubt not your merits, Emily, and why should I doubt your love for me?”

“ Doubt my love! merciful heaven! either you or I are fatally changed, to give rise to these heart-breaking altercations! Edward, you are not happy; long have I forbore to question you on the subject of your uneasiness.---Is it in the power of your once-beloved Emily to lessen your cares by participation?---Is any retrenchment necessary in our domestic arrangements?---I ask not from whence the cause proceeds; but blessed with your affectionate confidence, the humblest situation in life would have its comforts.”

“ I believe you are an angel!”

“ Suppress these violent emotions, dearest Edward, let me ever prove to you an endearing companion and a sym-

rhizing friend. Oh! tell me, then, my love, my husband, what is the cause of your late inquietude of mind?—I cannot long support the estrangement of your confidence: and tell me also, dearest Edward, from whence originates the unaccountable dislike you have of late evinced for ——”

“Emily, I never will be questioned on this subject; but, perhaps, my dislike only exists in your imagination.”

“I wish I could believe so; I wish I could also believe, that the hours of solitude I have lately passed were not too sure an evidence of your declining regard.—I scorn all frivolous complaint, but, indeed, I am wretched beyond expression.”

Fitsmorton paced the room in great perturbation; then, gazing on Emily's agitated countenance, he said, “Surely, thou art an angel!” and, folding her in his arms, she endeavoured to believe that peace

would again be restored to her bosom. Too delicate and considerate to press for a farther explanation of Edward's conduct, she with pain soon discovered that some hidden inquietude still preyed upon his spirits, and similar conversations never afforded permanent satisfaction or relief. How many evils would be averted, were the plain and onward path of sincerity preferred to the dark labyrinth of dissimulation ! How few cases authorise the latter ! and whether it proceed from the false tenderness of not afflicting a beloved object, or from the fear of exposing errors, which frequently accumulate by concealment, the idea is equally erroneous, and generally terminates in the encreasing perplexity and misery of every party.

Emily devoted her time and attention in endeavouring to win her husband back to those scenes of social and domestic happiness so congenial to her own taste and

inclination; he even appeared sensible of her tenderness and care, and well was she requited if by any little innocent device she could enjoy his society, or lead to that confidence which she so highly appreciated. Sometimes he appeared as if he wished to disclose a painful secret; with tremulous agitation she would await so interesting a moment, and he then relapsing into apathy and indifference, all her air-built hopes of returning peace would quickly vanish, and despondency again become the inmate of her bosom.

Mrs. Fitsmorton was in the country with Mr. and Mrs. Granby, and Emily dreaded her return, lest she should discover the great change in Edward's conduct. Emily had seen Sir George Sinclair at the places of public resort which she had of late frequented. He appeared apparently recovered from the effects of his accident and confinement, but intemperate indulgence

at the bottle, or any irritation of mind, sometimes brought on that derangement of intellect which had nearly proved fatal to his mental faculties. Yet still, the temporary remorse of his feelings, during a tedious illness, was no longer remembered: a thousand vague ideas floated on his imagination, when contemplating Emily's superior loveliness. He knew she was neglected by her husband, and that the dissipated revels of convivial society engrossed his time and ruined his fortune. Sir George Sinclair had therefore figured to himself that Emily was suffering in solitude and despair, and great was his astonishment when he first saw her in public; more beautiful, more fascinating than ever, the smile of peace irradiating her countenance, and which, to a casual observer, appeared to spring from her heart's contentment.

The frigidity with which she regarded him, and the contempt her features ex-

pressed, excited his revengeful and indignant feelings; and supposing, from her apparent serenity, that she was ignorant of Fitsmorton's growing imprudencies, he, with the malice of a demon, and the folly of a maniac, sent her an anonymous letter, setting forth the unmerited injuries she was threatened with, from the conduct of her husband; that gaming was even ruining his fortune; and even hinting at some connections, inimical to the delicacy of the nuptial bond. In promoting their disunion, Sir George Sinclair was indebted to one of his confederates in vice, who belonged to a club which Fitsmorton most frequented, and this man, by suiting the temptation as circumstances permitted, he was led, step by step, from domestic habits, till the charm of unbounded dissipation subdued every rational feeling, and every honourable pursuit.

When Emily received the above-men-

tioned letter, she was singing a lullaby to her infant. The natural strength of her mind prevented all useless and violent emotions; she endeavoured to disbelieve the infamous contents; she would elude the malice of her enemies, by consigning it to oblivion, yet the tear of inquietude trembled in her eye, and the throb of suspicion agitated her bosom.

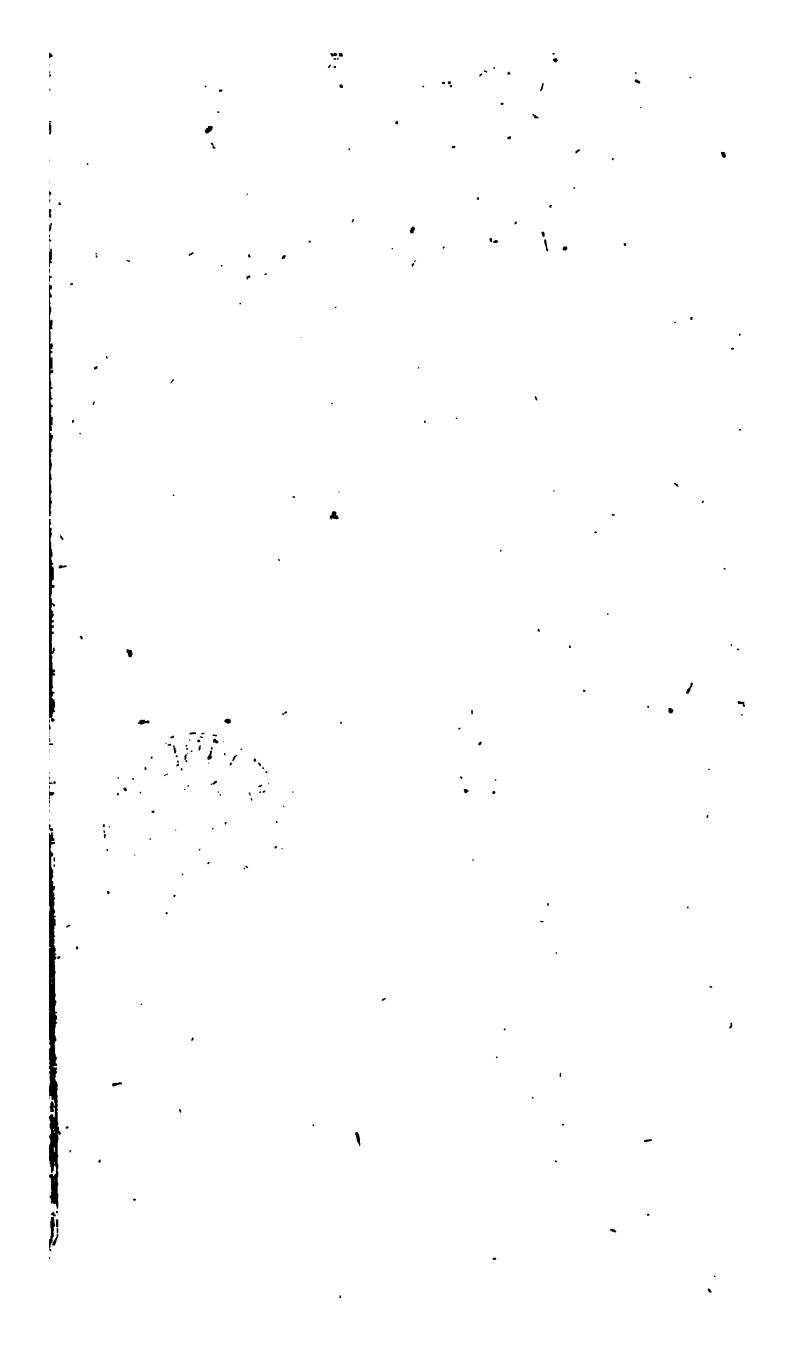
“Edward a gambler!--Edward unfaithful!--No, it could not be!--he may have erred from the weakness of humanity, but deliberate vice cannot be cherished by a mind once the seat of every virtue!--Oh! might she prove his guardian-angel, and gently lead him to the paths of peace! But conviction, not suspicion, should alone induce her to blame and to remonstrate! for had she not vowed her constancy till parted by death!”

Then, overpowered by the contrariety of her feelings, tears relieved her over-

charged heart. She supplicated the Disposer of all Events to support her under every trial, and derived peace and composure of mind from her sacred appeal to heaven.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE
PROFLIGATE MOTHER,
&c. &c.



THE
PROFLIGATE MOTHER;

OR,

The Fatal Cabinet.

BY MISS H—

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2 THE PROFLIGATE MOTHER; OR,

the cruel injustice and folly of his own conduct.

Here it may be necessary to trace the cause which first estranged his mind from peace. On the morning of that day when Emily first met an inebriated, instead of a rational companion, Fitsmorton would have confessed himself one of the happiest of men. It happened that, on this day, a beautiful, but long-neglected *Cabinet*, which had belonged to his first wife, caught his attention, by being placed in a closet where he was searching for papers. He carelessly opened the cabinet, and, if he gave a sigh to the memory of its once-lovely owner, it was the tribute of nature and of feeling! Removing it hastily, he unknowingly pressed the spring of a private drawer. Who can pourtray his astonishment, when, on opening a small packet, the envelope directed to Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton, he discovered the miniature of one of his most esteemed friends, who, as before mention-

ed, had left England for the East Indies, some months after Fitsmorton's marriage with Miss Dalrymple, a friend in whom he had reposed unlimited confidence, and to whom he had been liberal in the extreme on pecuniary subjects, and the report of whose death had been the source of deep regret and sorrow. The report, however, had of late been contradicted, and Fitsmorton's feelings at this moment alive only to jealousy and indignation; he gladly would have sacrificed this false, this hypocritical friend, to the justness of his revenge; and he formed a sort of compact with his frenzied mind, that the moment of their meeting should prove a fatally memorable one. The letter to Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton ran as follows:—

“ I snatch one instant, my ever dear love, while some necessary preparations are making, to bid you once more a tender and a long adieu. Let the accompaniment of these hurried lines sometimes

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remind you of a man who lives but in the hope of again pressing you to his throbbing heart! Why has fate decreed this cruel separation? Why did I not successfully combat your prudential scruples? But I must not take a retrospective view, or I shall be unnerved, unfit to encounter the long, the dreary gloom which darkly threatens the horizon of my fate. Ever remember, my dearest love, that the sacred union of our hearts is a solemn and impressive contract!—That it is independent of every local circumstance; and that time and absence are the criterion of real affection. Proudly my heart whispers—that though other ties and other duties induce you to command this temporary separation, I claim the first, the tenderest place in your's; and that we alike live but in the hope of meeting, perhaps, to part no more! Time wears; I must say the dreaded word—Farewell! Angels guard and bless you!

“DORVILLE.”

Fitsmorton, though scarcely crediting the evidence of his senses, was soon too fatally convinced of the villainous duplicity of his friend, and of the culpability of a being his heart had rested on in blissful confidence. A definition of his feelings cannot be attempted. The woman he could once have worshipped as an angel—so practised a deceiver! That she could quit the world with such a weight of guilt upon her mind! That she could, with deep hypocrisy, hang over him on the bed of sickness, and fall at last the victim of her cares! Merciful Heaven! what could he think! How illusive; how contradictory her character! The child he had cherished in his bosom as her living image!—That child!—Madness was in the reflections which would occur! And then, the frequent and cursory remarks that no resemblance could be traced to his features, he thought was now fatally accounted for.—Farewell the blessings of domestic peace,

4 THE PROFLIG

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NOTHER; ON,
 fair promise of inno-
 Might he not be cherish-
 in his bosom, which would
 add to the lacerating stings he
 He would trust no man!—
 now suspect every woman! Oh that
 he could instantly realize his hopes of re-
 venge on the fell destroyer of his peace!
 But he would carefully guard a secret so
 disgraceful and so heart breaking.

Nature at length subdued, tears of shame
 and indignation fell from his eyes. Dis-
 daining to encourage what he deemed an
 unmanly weakness, he wildly rushed from
 the house, and, recollecting a party with
 which he had refused to dine, on account
 of wishing to amuse his beloved Emily, he
 unexpectedly joined it at the hour of din-
 ner, and, as it may be remembered, re-
 turned home in a state of intoxication.
 The absence of his mind drew on him the
 common-place remarks of his gay associ-
 ates. The contents of the letter, the minia-

ture, too evidently bespoke the treachery of his friend, and the frailty of the woman he had confided in; to think that he had been so long deceived, abused, the easy tool of such depravity, and, whilst the semblance of an angel seemed to ensure to him all the comforts of domestic happiness, she was carrying on a shameful intercourse with a man whose conduct was equally deceptive, who had claimed the first, the tenderest place in her heart. The child who had been to him the solace of his mournful hours.—

Here his emotions appearing uncontrollable, he attempted some awkward apology for his absence of mind, and inattention to the company; and endeavoured to drown in wine the feelings which oppressed him. The free circulation of the bottle afforded a temporary relief; and the artificial spirits of the hour imposed upon his undiscerning companions, and they parted with the conviction of the good:

8 \ THE PROFLIGATE MOTHER; OR,

effects of social hilarity; and that Fitzmorton was becoming the life of every convivial meeting.

His interview with Emily has already been described, and from that fatal evening she dated the gradual alterations in her husband's temper and habits of life.

He had at first frequented the haunts of dissipation to escape, as it were, from scenes which too powerfully reminded him of former deceptions. The smiles of Emily were daggers to his heart: she might be weaving a fatal web for his undoing; for Mary Dalrymple was once, apparently, the most innocent and lovely of God's creatures. In vain he endeavoured to regard her child with affection; imagination converted suspicions into reality, and his soliloquies generally ended with a hope of a just revenge on the author of his unmerited injuries.

The strict propriety of Emily's conduct, the chastened admiration she excited in

all beholders, her decided preference of his comfort and happiness to her own, at times conspired to do her every justice, and by a frank avowal of the conflict he endured, confess every illusive doubt of her rectitude of conduct, and at once abjure the errors of his own. But habit had already stamped a desultory inclination for vice with a dangerous permanency; and he found it difficult to return to that domestic intercourse, once the charm and solace of his existence.

When Emily, from motives dictated by angelic purity, changed the tenour of her life to afford him that variety which she imagined his taste required, suspicion of somewhat wrong on her part, agitated his bosom: he determined to watch her narrowly, and to scrutinise her every action.

How would her indignant spirit have disdained his illiberal surmises, could she have guessed the cause of his sedulous attention to her conduct. And here, un-

consciously, she triumphed. Fitzmorton, in spite of every wayward sentiment, could only view her as the fair transcript of beauty, guarded by chaste decorum and unaffected propriety. But he generally apostrophising, "such once was Mary Dalrymple!" it seemed to operate as a powerful spell against the return of a generous confidence.

Emily had hitherto concealed from Mrs. Fitzmorton the neglect she experienced from her husband; ever attempting the most plausible excuses for his absence from home, and partiality for her son, admitted the possibility of his various and unforeseen engagements. Her long visit in the country, at Mr. Granby's, had precluded the suspicion that Edward had assumed a different character. One evening he was compelled by indisposition to remain at home. Mrs. Fitzmorton had passed the day with Emily, delighted with the growing improvements of

her grandson, and no less charmed with little Mary's interesting prattle. Edward appeared restless and uncomfortable; but this she attributed to the severe cold which oppressed him. In the course of conversation she seriously lamented that Mrs. Granby's health and spirits were much on the decline. "It is, (she continued,) a delicate subject to mention, even at this fire-side, and I scarcely know how to hint my fears, that Mary is not so happy as she ought to be. Granby is the most tender and affectionate of husbands; it may be that her present situation affects her health, and consequently her spirits suffer from the same cause. I have only to wish that the arrival of such a cherub as this, (pressing the infant Edward to her bosom,) may give a new turn to her ideas, and then I think it will be difficult to determine which are the happiest pair, my rustic Strephon and his wife, or the more fashionable, but equally beloved, couple before me."

Emily could only press the hand which was extended towards her; the vibration of her heart amounted to agony; for worlds she could not have met her husband's eye. And busying herself at the tea-table, she hoped her emotion would not be observed;—a sigh, or rather a stifled groan, from Fitsmorton arrested her attention. She tremulously asked if he felt in pain. "I do indeed, Emily, (he replied,) pain which I believe will not easily be mitigated." He had spoken from the impulse of the moment, and had great difficulty to combat his mother's anxiety, and entreaties, to send immediately for medical advice. He soon regained his self-possession;—promised to comply with her wishes if not better in the morning, and retired early to rest, suffering more from the oppression at his heart than from any serious or alarming indisposition.

When Mrs. Fitsmorton had bid Emily adieu, sad were her present thoughts,

most sad her future prospects. "To what purpose should she conceal her unhappiness: dreadful indeed is that grief which cannot be relieved by participation. But how could she wound the bosom of a mother, by exposing the failings of a son. "Merciful heaven! (she involuntary exclaimed,) support my mind with fortitude to bear this disappointment of my tenderest hopes as I ought to do. Restore the cherished object of my heart to peace, and whatever be the cause of his present uneasiness, oh, be it far removed from the misery of a guilty conscience!"

Fitsmorton, without one natural propensity to vice, was becoming its zealous adherent. The spirit of gaming, like an overwhelming torrent, undermining his present peace, and his future comfort; and the occupation which he at first indifferently resorted to, as a refuge from bitter reflection, was now become the master-passion of his soul.

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To Alfred Granby he dared not confide in the cause which had estranged him from his family : where the mind is sure to receive condemnation, it seldom discloses feelings which have led to error, or seeks an unlimited confidence in any human being.

So inconsistent was his judgment, that Emily, heart-broken, heroically performing her duties in life, was sometimes secretly arraigned by her infatuated husband, for not feeling constantly and acutely his neglect of her comfort and happiness.

“ She must know what a dissipated life I have lately led ; and if she loved me as in the first months of our marriage, would not her heart be lacerated by disappointment at not being the primary object of my attention ! And yet——(here he paused, struck by the injustice of his own observation.)

“ And yet has she not, with the forbear-

ance of an angel, studied my every wish—attentive to my health and peace, and not by the weakness of tears and lamentations evinced her own regret and sorrow? Have I not marked each turn of her expressive countenance, and seen only anxiety written there, when distrust and suspicion would have assailed the mind of any other woman?”

Thus thought; thus reasoned Edward Fittsmorton; but still he sought not the path of reformation, nor resisted the ruinous temptations with which he was surrounded. He was already much involved, but had hitherto scrupulously guarded that part of his mother's property which still remained in his hands.

Mrs. Fittsmorton being one morning at a fashionable jeweller's, ordering some alteration in a family coral, which she intended to give to her grandson, she perceived that Edward had just left the shop;

curiosity, not suspicion, induced her to enquire into the nature of his business.

The man shewed her a costly diamond sprig, which was ordered to be sent home immediately. Mrs. Fitsmorton, delighted with her son's kind attention, asked no further questions, and the next day mentioned the subject to Emily with all the exultation of paternal fondness. Emily turned pale, and falteringly said, "There must be some mistake; she had received no such present:" and bursting into an agony of tears, she found it impossible to avoid an explanation of their cause.

Surprise, grief, and indignation, assailed the mother's heart; then, pressing the passive hand of Emily, she said,

"Well can I appreciate the delicacy of your motives for concealing from me the alteration of Edward's conduct. Let not despair, my dearest creature, enervate the faculties of your mind: hitherto you must

have borne up with real fortitude. Emily! my beloved Emily, speak to me! All will yet be well: our Edward is not naturally of a depraved disposition; depend upon it some mystery will soon be unravelled."

Emily for some time vainly tried to speak; and had not the sense of suffocation been relieved by tears, fatal might have proved the struggle of her mind. In silent agony she put the anonymous billet into Mrs. Fitsmorton's hands, and soon after said,

"Chance has afforded you a dreadful corroboration of what is here advanced. Merciful Heaven! for what am I reserved?"

"For a return, dear Emily, of every comfort and happiness your virtues merit. Remember, that the more difficult your task, the greater will be your recompense; and, however liable the helpless state of woman to unmerited injury, gentleness of conduct will often prove its successful an-

tidate; whilst reproaches and impatience only render the evil more serious."

Emily felt the truth of Mrs. Fitsmorton's remarks; but still the contest of indignation and love for her husband nearly overpowered the stability of her mind.

"She would never reproach him with bitterness; but she would dispassionately acquaint him that she felt the cruelty of his conduct; that she had long smothered the growing anguish of her heart." And then, aware how delicate was the part she had to perform, she for a moment gave way to the feelings of despair; but, aroused by Mrs. Fitsmorton's affectionate solicitude, she said: "I will, my dearest madam, endeavour to act as you wish I should. I am sure my heart is inclined to lenity; and to bring our wanderer back to peace would prove a glorious triumph: and yet how delicate the trial! If I resent his behaviour too deeply, a cruel separation may be the consequence—and I thereby involve him.

in the depths of vice. If I regard his infidelity lightly, and stifle every indignant feeling, how reprehensible and indelicate were my conduct!"

It were vain to recapitulate every heart-breaking conference which passed on this painful subject. But when Mrs. Fitsmorton next met her son, she overwhelmed him not with deserved reproaches. She simply said :

"Chance has afforded me some knowledge of your estrangement from your wife and family. My son, bring not the 'grey hairs of your mother with sorrow to the gravé.' Reduce not Emily and your children to beggary ! Fall not beneath the contempt of those you once so fondly loved, by suffering your reason to be enslaved by habit, and the best affections of your heart to be sacrificed to folly and dissipation."

This was indeed a moment of agony to

Fitsmorton: fortune had been fatally unpropitious. He had staked his all, excepting the family estate; and even his mother's property had been nearly sacrificed to his rashness. Her sudden appeal electrified his feelings; confusion and remorse were visible in his countenance. (She continued.)

“ I am at this moment incapable of reasoning with you as I wish; but be assured that every pecuniary assistance in my power shall be yours. Would that my purse were as capacious as my heart! Then waving her hand, as if to prevent any farther conversation, she left him abruptly, and left him a prey to all the agony of a susceptible, but guilty mind. Alas! she knew not, when she talked of pecuniary assistance, how, like a drop of water in the bosom of the ocean, was the relief she could offer! The diamonds lavished on vice and depravity; his neglect

of her darling Emily, appeared more afflictive to her, in their consequences, than any other consideration, because she was happily ignorant of the extent of his losses, and of the dreadful inatuation which gaming imposes on the human mind."

Had Fitsmorton seen Emily whilst the feelings of remorse were alive in his bosom, he probably might have been affected by the tender expostulations of the woman he was so unjustly neglecting; but, unfortunately meeting with some associates of his gayest hours, he accompanied them to the usual resort of conviviality; and, when he returned home, he overpowered Emily's resolution of expostulating with him, by ironically thanking her for having complained to his mother; and, heated with wine, and smarting under the losses of the evening, they seemed, by altercation, only to widen the breach betwixt them and happiness: and Emily spent the night in vainly

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adopting and rejecting plans for stemming the torrent of affliction, which threatened to overwhelm her in its rapid and alarming course.

CHAP. II.

TIME passed wearily on, and Emily could only participate with Mrs. Fitsmorton in the affliction which consumed them. Miss Travers was their frequent visitor, and had introduced Mr. Macartny, the gentleman to whom she was engaged; and dull of comprehension must have been their minds, could they not have traced on Emily's countenance the sad effects of sorrow and anxiety. And, whilst Miss Travers execrated the conduct of Fitsmorton, she endeavoured, through Mr. Macartny's exertions, to trace its source, and ameliorate its dreadful effects. He was alike interested on the subject, and had, more than once, hinted his dislike of Mr. Franks, who was a constant visitor at Fitsmorton's house; but, as he knew him to be the friend of Sir George Sinclair, Macartny, from various

circumstances, dreaded their united machinations. Mr. Franks's person was fine, his manner insinuating, and his attentions to the unsuspecting Emily were veiled under that delicacy and liberality of sentiment so difficult to be distinguished from the real benevolence of a feeling heart. He always mentioned her husband with tenderness and esteem; and, whilst he, by every indirect method, was plunging him into the depths of vice, he talked of disinterested friendship, as the grand sweetener of human existence.

He spoke to her of Sir George Sinclair in the softest tones of compassion, even hinting that disappointment, more than the unfortunate accident he had met with, contributed to encrease that occasional derangement of intellect he was subject to. Emily had too much good sense to listen with patience when this subject was intruded. Of her husband only could Mr. Franks speak, to induce her to attend to

to his conversation. Her whole mind was absorbed on one distressing subject; and, though she endeavoured to doubt the truth of the anonymous letter, the diamond sprig, Fitsmorton's occasional distress for money, and his cruel neglect of her, all contributed to make her anticipate the afflictions which might occur. Emily frequently heard from her excellent friends at the rectory. Dr. Leicester, being in town, called upon her one morning, and addressed her with unusual exhilaration of spirits; but, receding a few paces, he appeared struck with the despondency of her countenance.

"How is this, my dearest lady?" He continued, "Mr. Fitsmorton; your children; all well, I hope?"

She looked mournfully at him, but acknowledged they were in good health.

"I am, however, the messenger of good news," he continued; "the lottery-ticket which was divided between you and Mrs.

Leicester is come up a prize of ten thousand pounds, principal money! I have saved you all unnecessary trouble, and now lay Fortune's favours at your feet. I think I can guess the destination of this treasure. All good wives delight in making presents to their husbands; and I already anticipate the expression of my dear woman's features, when she returns the notes into my hands."

Emily replied, "Can money purchase happiness?"

"Assuredly not; but often proves its great auxiliary: and any unlooked-for addition to fortune enlarges the sphere of benevolence; and the temporary sufferer, or the more serious victim of poverty, may feel the good effects of our unexpectedly encreased fund of charity.

"Hey day! my dear lady! my dear Emily! Why these tears? Something afflicts you very deeply! Look upon me still as your father; and, if it be in my power

to alleviate any distress, confide in the sincerity of my friendship! If the cloud is only transient, interference may prove impertinent, or, at least, unnecessary."

"My excellent friend! What can I answer you? I am afraid my sorrow is irremediable!"

"Say not so, my dear child! but come, I will give you time to consider whether, as a father, I may claim your confidence. I intended to tax your hospitality, and to request a night's lodging, my business not permitting me to leave town till to-morrow."

"Most willingly, my dear Sir, do I receive so welcome a guest; but you—you will probably dine *tête-a-tête* with me."

Soon after Dr. Leicester parted with her till the hour of dinner. She received a hasty note from Fismorton, saying, he was obliged to leave town for some days. Accustomed now to these sort of absences, she resolved to adopt some expedient for a

proper explanation on his part, and on hers a full confession of the wretched state of anxiety she lived in.

“ And is it come to this, (she involuntary exclaimed,) he who was once the dear partner of my heart, who seemed to live but in my presence, whose apparent attachment bid defiance to all obstacles to our union; that he should thus have become weaned from the bosom of his family;—surely, surely, the pain of unrequited affection is as great an affliction as woman can feel! The time was, when such a note as this from Fitsmorton would have broken my heart: the time was, when the absence of a day was a source of regret to both.

And in spite of every attempt to gain patience and fortitude, the probable destination of the diamond sprig swelled her heart with agony.

Emily generally gave orders to be denied to company when Edward was absent; but either forgetting her usual res-

friction, or by some casual mistake,—whilst she sat expecting the return of Dr. Leicester, Mr. Franks was announced. She certainly regarded him in a favourable point of view, for she could not read his heart. He now well knew that there was but one step between Fitsmorton and inevitable ruin. He knew that he was gone with a party to Fitsmorton Park, and probably for the last time; as he had every reason to believe the estate would soon of necessity be sacrificed, to discharge some *honourably* contracted debts. Mr. Franks, therefore, in this visit, affected a great dejection of spirits, permitting the constantly suppressed sigh, and embarrassed manner, to excite her attention, in hopes to convince her of his heart-felt sympathy. He once softly ejaculated, “my poor infatuated friend;” and before she had the power to demand an explanation of the words, he had tenderly seized her hand, and bowing upon it, as if to conceal his own emotions, he incoherently lamented that inno-

cence like hers should be so deceived, so deeply injured: he then immediately left the room, for knowing that Emily expected Dr. Leicester to dine and to sleep at the house; he felt little inclination to meet a character so opposite to his own.

“ Merciful Heaven! (Emily exclaimed, when Franks had so suddenly departed,) am I then become an object of commiseration to all the world? How would this man, the friend of my husband, dare to speak thus to me, were he not well convinced of the cruel neglect I have experienced? He surely has ever proved himself Fitsmorter’s friend, and the warmth of his feelings has perhaps betrayed him into this momentary agitation on my account; but had my life, my peace depended on it, I think I could not have questioned him on the subject.”

Dr. Leicester interrupted this mournful soliloquy, and Emily’s mind, softened, and indeed struggling with grief, could not resist the friendly and delicate enquiries of her venerable guest. She confidentially

narrated every thing which had occurred, and requested his advice how to act under such severe disappointments.

“ My dear child, (replied Dr. Leicester,) put your trust in God, for he defendeth the cause of the oppressed; all human means are, however, to be pursued to counteract evil. Infatuated as our poor friend now is, the time will come when he will appreciate your worth. Desperation and violence generally defeat their own purpose; let no injudicious reproaches fall from your lips, you have a difficult task to perform; but Fitsmorton is of a noble nature.

One false step has, in all probability, led to those paths of temptation, more frequently declaimed against than resisted by erring humanity. Dear lady, we will, if possible, save him from farther ruin.”

“ Were I the only sufferer, I could better support myself under these heart-breaking trials, but my children, my husband's dear and respectable mother. When I

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consider that one evening's folly may involve us all in irremediable ruin, my mind sinks with despair at too evident a prospect of the misery which may await us.

"How I did love him, heaven and my own heart can only know."

"And depend upon it, my dear creature, that he still loves you; evil propensities cannot have taken so deep a root in his heart, as to have eradicated every feeling of nature. Your confession of his apparently returning confidence, the struggles his mind, you acknowledge, has experienced; all proclaim it alive to the still, but powerful voice of conscience."

"Whence, my dear friend, can originate his dislike to our poor little girl?"

"That, I confess, surprises me; nay; baffles my penetration to unravel at present. You, my dear, must calmly, and dispassionately, talk to him."

"It is more difficult to accomplish than you can imagine."

"Then write to him; let your heart speak, and who can be deaf to its dictates? My dear lady, all will yet be well."

"My dear Sir, you would willingly give peace to the mourner's heart; but you shall see my yet remaining treasures. And whilst they are spared to me, I have some consolation left."

Emily then rang the bell for the children, and exerted her spirits to the utmost. In the evening Mrs. Fitsmorton, Mr. Maecartny, and Miss Travers, passed some hours with her and Dr. Leicester, each endeavouring to converse with serenity, though each ruminating on the dreaded future.

Fitsmorton, as an act of desperation, visited his paternal dwelling. Had he been alone, reflection might have proved salutary to his distracted mind; but reflection in the society which accompanied him, was not the order of the day. Still, in some moments of occasional solitude, the deep

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regrets of erring humanity stole into his agitated bosom.

“How often, (said he,) have I anticipated the fond delight of seeing my Emily the mistress of this charming place. Now my undone and ruined Emily! How shall I bear thy just reproaches! And shouldst thou not be the angel thou appearest, bitter indeed will prove the hour of retribution; for my neglect can alone have led thy mind to error! My poor boy! he may live to curse the memory of his father.” Then, nearly frantic from a paroxysm of despair, unavailing remorse, not genuine repentance, led him to drown his feelings in the intemperate circle of conviviality; and whilst the sparkling goblet gave point to wit, and the graceful periods of eloquence flowed from his tongue, the sufferings of Emily, the ruin of himself, and the future beggary of his child, were alike disregarded and forgotten. On his return to London, two

letters of very different import were given to him. One ran thus :

“ Look at home, it is a wise father who knows his own children.

“ ANONYMOUS.”

The other letter was from Emily :

“ In vain have I courted your attention, my dearest Edward, to listen to the dictates of a heart bending under the weight of disappointment and sorrow. Long have I been obliged to bear in silence your cruel neglect, and total estrangement from those domestic comforts and habits which once formed the chief blessing of your existence : but I will not dwell upon my own sufferings ; you know my heart, and if yours be not dead to humanity and feeling,—oh, you must well know the severity of those pangs which arise from the indifference of a beloved object ! That I have loved you with all the tenderness and delicacy of affection, with all the enthusiasm of passion, my poor lacerated bosom scruples not to

acknowledge. My dependence, next to the Almighty, rested on you; my very existence seemed to depend on your approving smile; and the world's boasted variety I could gladly have shut out for the blessing of your loved society. We were happy beyond the common lot of mortals; and I now ask, with the trembling agitation of a disappointed heart, what has caused the sad fatal alteration I experience? I ask whether pecuniary distresses disturb your mind? Whether we are even threatened with the near approach of poverty? Recollect we were not given to one another merely to bask in the sunshine of a summer's day. I have resolution to weather any storm of adversary, if supported by the object of my best affections. Believe me, my husband, I would sooner share your fate in a prison, than shine in the gaudy trappings of unsubstantial ambition. I must speak still plainer; I must ask you why you have so long shunned those do-

domestic habits, once so congenial to your mind? I have taken my own conduct severely to task, and some time ago I fancied that the monotony of our life at home caused you to seek variety abroad. I therefore assumed a gaiety I could not feel, and, for your sake, courted dissipation. You may remember how soon you tired of the promiscuous throng we were obliged to encounter; and how vain have been my endeavours to regain your confidence. Dear Edward, I ask why such things are? Why the being who once seemed so dear to you, is now become an object of indifference? Tell me the truth, and I can bear all things.—Oh, tell me the dreadful truths. Has another estranged your affections from me? No illiberal jealousy dictates the heart-breaking question: I have good reasons for urging it with solemnity. By chance alone I know that a diamond sprig was purchased by you; but whom to adorn I know not, nor do I

wish to be informed. Now, Edward! how shall I express myself in terms sufficiently delicate? How make you comprehend the soul-harrowing emotions with which I am agitated? If folly has led you astray, abjure your error, and return to happiness and love. But if error is voluntarily continued, if the best affections of the heart are bartered for the delusions of vice, and the marriage vow is violated with impunity, then, Edward, though the struggle costs me my life, we part, and perhaps we part forever! Tell me you have erred, but tell me you will err no more, and I will receive your returning love and confidence, as the grand restorer of my long-lost happiness.

“Yet another question, (it is long since I have held so much intercourse with you.) Why is our little girl neglected by her father? Were you to say, ‘Dear Emily, I must love this child for the sake of the being who gave her birth;’ such feeling

on your part would be but natural; and on mine such a generous confidence would be highly gratifying. So lovely, so interesting a child! believe me when I say, she divides my heart with our charming infant. In a word, whatever be the cause of your estrangement, confide wholly in me. My heart never ceases to pray to the Almighty to arm you with resolution to resist every ruinous temptation, and I entreat you by all your hopes of happiness, both here and hereafter, to turn from the path of certain destruction. Too well you must know to what infatuation I allude; think of your dear and respectable mother, of your infant son, and of your once-beloved Emily; and let the ties of duty and affection supersede every other consideration. You will perhaps wonder how I am so well informed of your proceedings. I aim at no mystery; let us seek one hour of confidence; calumny shall then be confuted, or indiscretion remembered no more! A twelvemonth past,

had I been told that I must have sought this method to arrest your attention, dear Edward, could I have believed it? for there was a time, when even a sigh from my bosom gave pain to yours. And now I may consume my life in sighs and tears, and receive neither sympathy nor indulgence. Again I entreat you to be candid, to be sincere, and to return to the affectionate bosom of your once-beloved.

“EMILY.”

Fitsmorton, wholly taken up with the perusal of Emily's letter, had, in absence of mind, put the other into his pocket without reading it. Conviction of his own follies, and of his wife's superiority, dyed his cheek with the blush of shame.

“What am I about? What injustice am I guilty of towards this dear, this inestimable woman? but alas! she yet knows not of half my follies. I have been throwing away an invaluable jewel; hurrying by fast steps to the verge of ruin, because a villain in the form of a friend, deceived my

unsuspecting mind ; because the being on whose fidelity and honour I firmly rested, laughed at my credulity ; but is virtue then extirpated from the world, since I have individually suffered from hypocrisy and vice ? Idiot ! madman ! that I have been ! But that I dread the proud superiority of my Emily's mind ; I would throw myself on her mercy, and with tears of penitence confess the infatuation which has undone me."

But soon aroused by the bitterness of reflection, he traversed the room in all the agitation of despair ; he had desperately involved his affairs, he was bound in honor to pay large sums of money, which only the sale of the family estate could answer : five thousand pounds in his hands, part of his mother's property, was the only wreck of fortune left : at length, curses on the villain whose deceptive conduct had thus unsettled his principles, burst from his quivering lips, and he imprecated ven-

geance on the destroyer's head, should fate ever bestow the power of punishment.

He would conceal from Emily—from the whole world—the disgrace which rankled at his heart: but he would confess to her the infatuation which had misled him, and explain every circumstance relative to the diamond sprig—a momentary satisfaction pervading his mind that he could do so with honour (comparatively speaking) to himself. Then again dreading the superiority of Emily, and as soon anticipating the sweet indulgence of her mind, and the heart-felt joy with which she would welcome his returning confidence, he immediately sought her in her dressing-room. She did not know he was returned to town, and had just left home with the nurses and the children, to try the effect of air and exercise upon her health and spirits. Fitsmorton supposing she might be in the nursery, ascended the stairs in breathless expectation: the room

was empty. He soon learned from the servants by whom their mistress was accompanied in her airing; and having some unpleasant business to transact, on the subject of money, he left the house, determining to surprise Emily with his company at the hour of dinner. His mind had nearly recovered its usual tone: he walked along in silent rumination, when the letter which he put into his pocket unopened, arrested his attention. After having read the contents — “Pshaw! — (he mentally ejaculated) — nothing now can shake my resolutions!” He read it again. “Some one certainly knows how I am situated; or this is a very strange coincidence of circumstances.”

In spite of reason, he felt discomposed and irritated; and, at that moment, he was accosted by his supposed friend and constant companion, Mr. Franks. After the usual salutations of the day, he said,

“You seem absent and uneasy, my

his absence—was a circumstance which, in the present irritable state of his mind, gave him more inquietude than he chose to acknowledge.

The letters he was obliged to write were to promise a prompt payment of some gambling debts. Tradespeople were becoming importunate creditors; and, to afford a temporary oblivion of despair, he yielded to the fascination of unbounded conviviality; and flushed with wine, in all the exhilaration of artificial spirits, he invoked the delusive smiles of fortune, and returned home in the evening, ruined beyond redemption, and met the anxious and susceptible Emily—in a situation little calculated to soothe her mind, or to quiet her apprehensions.

CHAP. III.

SHORT-LIVED are generally the friendships of the unprincipled and the wicked! Sir George Sinclair had confided to Mr. Franks his passion for Emily, and the impossibility of being again publicly introduced to her society.

Franks undertook to describe to her Sir George's penitence for past offences, and to express his hopes of pardon.

Not to be too prolix on the iniquitous plots they wished to form—an inconvenient debt of Mr. Franks's was to be cancelled, whenever Emily consented personally to receive the Baronet's excuses.—Franks knew it never could be accomplished; but, an adept in deception, he fabricated plans as existing circumstances permitted, and became in love (if the expression may be so profaned) with Mrs.

Fitsmorton himself. Hence that softness of manner and insinuating conduct which had so forcibly struck Mr. Macartny and Miss Travers.—Sir George Sinclair and Mr. Franks, just about this period, materially differed on the settling of some money matters. The former being subject to fits of violent passion, (particularly after a free circulation of the bottle,) almost amounting to mental derangement, frequently uttered the most offensive and abusive language, which his convenient friend had long borne in silence, and with well-dissembled patience. But a very serious breach now occurred—and they parted with mutual threats, and mutual disgust. Franks determined to take an early opportunity of discovering to Emily Sir George Sinclair's nefarious views and intentions, to warn her of his future machinations, of the derangement of intellect he was subject to—to profess himself her friend, and, perhaps, insidiously to talk of

love under the mask of friendship. He knew she was neglected by her husband; he knew that Fitsmorton's mind was in a distracted state, and, by infusing therein some well-timed suspicions of Emily's want of prudence, he hoped to encrease their mutual unhappiness.

When Emily returned from the airing with her children, she felt disappointed and mortified to have been from home, when Fitsmorton had so evidently wished to meet with her: but she was soon aroused from unpleasant reflections, by the servant informing her that a young woman earnestly requested admittance. Little inclined to see a stranger, she desired to know the business. The servant said, to Mrs. Fitsmorton only would she disclose it. Emily, imagining it might be some pensioner of Mrs. Fitsmorton's, ordered the young woman to be admitted.—She curtsied—in silence and confusion; but, seeming to derive courage from Emily's conciliating

manner, attempted an explanation of her intrusion.

Emily felt alarmed; a thousand vague ideas floated on her mind, but endeavouring to suppress her own emotions, she said,

“ Sit down, young woman, take time to recover yourself; probably it was with Mrs. Fitsmorton you wished to converse.”

“ No, madam, my business only concerns Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton.” The palpitation of Emily’s heart was almost uncontrollable. She examined the young woman’s countenance, it seemed to express both resentment and shame.

“ Speak then immediately the purport of your visit,” (Emily at length articulated.)

“ I come, madam, to warn you of your danger, and——”

“ Be quick in your communications: from whence came you? and what danger can you have the power to warn me of?”

“ I live, madam, in Mr. Franks’s family; his aunt, with whom he occasionally re-

sides, engaged me, some time ago, as a sort of upper servant. Sir George Sinclair was very often at the house; and but the other day, (indeed it was quite by chance,) I being at work in a sitting-room which leads to another apartment, only separated by folding-doors, I heard Sir George Sinclair and Mr. Franks enter the room. At first they spoke very low; but soon, apparently forgetting this caution, the doors being only slightly put to, I heard, very distinctly, Mr. Franks declare that he would do all he could to—to—to put you in the power of Sir George Sinclair—that you had already expressed great pity for him—and that he had little doubt, from the neglect you experienced from your husband, that you would pardon every past offence.—They then spoke very low again. I judged from the few words I could hear, that their entire reconciliation was to be the consequence of your good understanding with Sir George Sinclair; and, after

having talked a great deal upon the subject, Mr. Franks said,—Oh madam, he is such a deceiver!—“that you were an angel”—and—and—I—thought it my duty to—to tell you what I had heard.”

“This is a very extraordinary story,” Emily replied. “Be quite correct, my good girl, in what you advance: and let me ask you what induced your visit here? Was it merely in justice and compassion towards me? or did you feel any personal resentment on the subject?”

The young woman turned pale—she seemed ready to faint; and Emily, on opening her cloak, fancied she perceived a peculiarity in her shape not quite consistent with the innocence she had intended to manifest.

“I have indeed told you the truth, madam,” was her reply.

“Be candid and sincere, and I may prove your friend. Will you promise to answer me one question truly, and without evasion?”

“Such a lady as you are cannot ask any improper question. I may venture to say I will answer, without hesitation.”

“Then tell me; and tell me truly—Are you a married woman?”

A momentary suffusion of crimson dyed the poor girl's cheek; but, struggling to suppress such an evidence of feeling, she replied:—

“This is a strange and a most unexpected question, indeed! nor can I imagine why you ask it. [She again coloured, as if in resentment and indignation.] I thought to do you a service, Madam, by coming here—and what do I get in return?—Indeed I cannot guess your meaning.”

“Your own conscience, young woman, can best comprehend my meaning.”

“You need not be angry, Madam; I have said nothing I am ashamed of, I have done my duty, and exposed Sir George and Mr. Franks. You know you

are at liberty to make what use you please of my well-intentioned visit. So I wish you a good morning, Madam."

Emily arose, and, taking the young woman's hand, thus spoke to her:—

"I certainly have little right to detain you, if you wish to go immediately; but be seated again, and hear what I have to say to you. I ask you, once more, to deal candidly with me. In whatever way you may have been unfortunate, I can, perhaps, befriend you—by every necessary alleviation of any critical distress. We are all liable to error, which becomes doubly criminal when deliberately persisted in."

The young woman burst into tears—Emily's voice and manner had reached her heart; but still any particular confession died upon her lips. She continued to sob, as if in violent despair; and, at length, falteringly said:—

"Were all ladies like you, Madam!—I am so miserable!—what will become of me?"

Emily soothed her with gentleness.

“ You would spurn me from your presence, were I to confess all—you would betray me to my friends.”

“ I promise you I will not—confide in me with sincerity.”

“ Were my poor father acquainted with his daughter’s credulity and folly, I am sure it would kill him. I shall never see him again.”

Poor Emily had undergone a variety of distressing emotions—it might be her own husband’s depravity she was about to be confirmed in ; but, exerting every effort of resolution, she again urged her agitated companion to tell her story with candour and truth.

“ Well, Madam---I will indeed tell you all the truth. I am the daughter of a respectable farmer in the country. We are a very large family : and, about a twelve-month ago, my father was induced to let me come up to town to a genteel service.

Oh what good advice and cautions he gave me to recommend a virtuous conduct! A very particular friend introduced me to Mrs. Rebecca Franks's notice; and, as my education had been superior to the generality of servants, she was pleased with the idea that I could read to her, and work fine linen. For six months I was as happy as leaving my parents and my lady's temper permitted me to be. Mr. Franks, who generally spent some months in the year with his aunt, often spoke to me, (as I then thought, very condescendingly;) but always more so if ever by chance he met with me alone. He soon attempted to grow more familiar. I repulsed him at first as much as possible; but he talked so kindly, and insisted upon my receiving some very pretty presents, that I believe I did not then avoid him as much as I ought to have done; and when he solemnly swore he could not live without me, I began to think any situation was preferable to ser-

virtude and dependance—for my mistress was, at times, very severe, and always capricious.—Oh what promises he made! that if I were prudent and secret, the time might come when he would marry me! He had made me confess my regard for him—and then took advantage of my weakness. He made me, Madam, the most miserable of human beings! He had promised a sum of money; but I declare he has not given me a sixpence since he has been my ruin—but always threatened me with desertion and poverty, if I dared to breathe to his aunt a syllable of our intercourse. She soon regarded me with a suspicious eye, and has of late questioned me very severely. I have denied all her accusations, and even answered her with pertness and resentment; and she always denounced vengeance and punishment for the crime she thought I had been guilty of—saying, I should soon be in the streets a wretched wanderer, and die in a hovel, diseased and

miserable. In vain I represented to Mr. Franks my unhappy situation, and his aunt's accusations.—With tremendous oaths he again threatened my destruction, if I exposed his conduct: and, without money, without friends, where could I turn for relief? In the agonies of despair, how shall I repeat it? I have endeavoured, by medicine, to remove the misery of my situation; and I determined, if not successful in the attempt when the period arrived which would confirm my shame, to destroy the fatal evidence of unequivocal guilt. Start not, Madam, with horror at such a resolution! Who would receive me into their house? who would take care of my child? where could I procure an honest livelihood? how could I persuade such unfeeling people as my mistress and Mr. Franks that my penitence was sincere? My father would turn me from his door, and I should be pointed at as an undone and lost creature, by those who were good and virtuous. If I defied

it all, and endeavoured to take care of my child, how could I support myself by industry?——All this, indeed, I told Mr. Franks before I heard his conversation with Sir George Sinclair. Oh Madam! do not betray me to my mistress, or my friends; but save me, if possible, from shame and misery.”

“ I have listened most attentively to your story; nor will I doubt your veracity: this is not a time to reprobate your conduct with severity; but as you value your eternal happiness, dare not to encourage the wicked ideas which you have just confessed; remember that you can only expiate past offences by the strictest adherence to virtue for the future! How could you ever think of sacrificing the life of an innocent being—and this being your own child! Surely, if you had once felt the warm pressure of its little form, Nature would have revolted at the crime! Besides, depend upon it that the Almighty will, sooner or later,

bring the murderer to justice; and what then think you of the shame annexed to such an exposition?"

"Oh Madam! do not——pray do not speak thus——but will you now stand my friend?"

Subdued by her agitation, she fell on her knees to Emily, and, in the attitude of supplication, remained a few moments, incapable of articulating a word. At length, somewhat relieved by a violent flood of tears, she said:—

"Point out the method to save me from destruction: my gratitude shall end but with my life."

Emily soothed her in the gentlest manner—the girl almost worshipping her as an angel, and promising to be solely guided by her advice.

Mrs. Fitsmorton, most opportunely now calling to see Emily, and the children, was confidentially entrusted with the poor girl's story, and in the urbanity and goodness of

her heart, she offered to take the young woman home with her, to make every proper enquiry of Mrs. Rebecca Franks ; and advise that lady to part quietly with the girl, for many and obvious reasons ; not doubting that as suspicions had been admitted, she would rejoice at her departure. Catherine Walker, (which was the young woman's name,) accompanied Mrs. Fitsmorton home ; and Emily pondered some time on the scene which had passed, and on the hypocritical conduct of a man she had regarded as Edward's friend and her own. She felt satisfied that Catherine was now in good hands ; that Mrs. Fitsmorton would enquire, with perseverance, into the truth of the story, and that if no levity of conduct appeared from the investigation, she would gladly assist in some plan to relieve her necessities.

The hour of dinner arrived, but Fitsmorton still was absent. Oh ! had returning love been admitted into his bosom !

would he not have awaited with anxious impatience for the hour of meeting? She longed to tell him of her good luck in the lottery, hoping it might prove to him a pleasant and convenient circumstance. Worn out with fruitless regrets, and vain anticipations, she despairingly thought that death only could relieve her from the misery she endured; but at this instant her little boy being brought into the room, as she pressed the smiling cherub to her heart, she felt that life had not yet lost its interest, and that she could bear with patience its various and afflictive changes. Every passing hour encreased her trembling expectations. Towards the evening she began to fear that Fitsmorton would not be in a state to meet her as she wished; and great was her alarm, when the servant informed her, that a gentleman would not be denied admittance; saying he had a message to deliver from Mr. Fitsmorton.

She had not time for deliberation, he

entered the room; and now a thousand shocking thoughts blanched her cheek with fear, and her whole frame shook with trepidation. 'What language can express her emotions when Mr. Franks advanced towards her! Was he to be the messenger of misery? was he to witness the incoherence of sorrow, and ascertain some unexpected affliction; for Fitsmorton was associated with every idea; and the sad effects of ungoverned rashness in her husband's conduct, had of late been too frequently anticipated. Endeavouring to conceal her feelings, she recoiled with indignation from Mr. Franks's offered hand, and the laconic interrogatory of "well, sir," only escaped her lips.

"Pardon, dear madam, the innocent artifice I have presumed to practice, to gain admittance to your presence."

She interrupted him, "You come not then, sir, from Mr. Fitsmorton."

"I have certainly just parted with him,

had intruded himself so unexpectedly, was to warn her of the folly of a madman; that he trembled to think what the rashness of a man in Sir George Sinclair's situation might induce him to attempt.

"Where, (he continued,) may that tendency to insanity lead him, to which he has been subject, since the dreadful accident he met with? He swears he will yet have you in his power; that it is your beauty that enslaves his senses. And but for my persuasions, he would ere this have committed some outrage to secure so enviable a prize."

"Your story is so perfectly ridiculous, that I begin to think you must have met with a similar accident to that of Sir George Sinclair's."

"By heavens! madam, your contempt is past endurance! Forgive my vehemence, on my knees I entreat your pardon, Oh how gladly would I prove myself your guardian and your friend; had I early

met with so lovely, so amiable a being, how blessed had been my fate! How often in secret have I lamented the insensibility of the most envied of men."

"Rise, sir, nor dare profane my ears with such specious, such hypocritical language. Our conference is nearly now, and for ever, at an end. I have only one simple question to ask you."

"A thousand from your lips, it would be my pride and my pleasure to answer; nay, my whole life devoted to the service of Mrs. Fitsmorton, could but ill convince her of my unalterable devotion! of my admiration of her virtues; and of my heart-felt sensibility of her unmerited wrongs!"

"Your very moral and disinterested conduct affords me little doubt but that your boasted sensibility will experience a very severe trial, when I ask you if Catherine Walker is not an intimate acquaintance of yours?" Emily then pulling the bell in haste, only added:

“I am well acquainted with the very honourable part you have acted, and my best advice is, that you attend to Mrs. Fitsmorton’s proposals of pecuniary relief for the object of your cruel deception; or less lenient measures may be resorted to.”

The servant now answering the bell, Emily desired him to open the door for Mr. Franks. And shocked at the contrariety of passions his countenance expressed, she rushed through the folding doors into the adjoining drawing-room, and felt a comparative relief when she was assured that he had left the house.

Emily endeavoured not to give full credit to what Mr. Franks had so confidently asserted, yet doubt, fear, and anxiety, agitated her bosom. He had hinted, in the course of their conference, that Sir George Sinclair was the author of the anonymous letter she had received; but she knew not that Franks was his artful instigator; she

knew not that he was the vile abetter of all her husband's follies, and had endeavoured to infuse every poisonous suspicion of her conduct into his alienated mind. Of Sir George Sinclair's shallow plots, and half-formed machinations, she had little fear; and her eyes open to the deceptive character of Mr. Franks, she seemed even to doubt their possibility. Edward, her beloved Edward, seeking the road to destruction,—the diamonds lavished on some artful unworthy being, and the ruin with which she and her children was threatened, were subjects which agonised her mind with emotions beyond the power of reason to controul.

Evening approached, and nothing interrupted her sad reflections but the servant bringing into the room some letters for his master: she had just involuntary exclaimed, "Surely he cannot have read my letter!" when the object of her solicitude knocked at the door. A transient view of

his countenance chilled her heart with horror ; pale, haggard, his eyes appearing fixed on vacancy, and his whole frame seeming to have suffered from recent and ungoverned agitation.

“ My dear Edward ! ” was all she could at first articulate ; then endeavouring to subdue her feelings, she said, “ Welcome home once more ! you know not with what impatience I have expected you ! ”

“ Home ! (he emphatically repeated,) have I a home yet remaining ? ”

“ Yes, my love, and a heart which longs to repose again in confidence on your bosom ; gaze not so wildly at me, it is your own Emily who speaks to you ; my letter must have convinced you how I have longed for this moment of meeting.”

“ My Emily ! this is indeed a bitter moment ! ”

“ Something oppresses you, dear Edward. I am prepared for every evil but the total loss of your affection and confidence.”

He clasped his hands in agony, then regarding her a moment in silence, he flung his arms around her, and wept upon her bosom. It was a feeling so awful, so impressive, that a few moments elapsed before either could break the solemn silence; at length Emily said,

“The torture of suspense is not to be borne; my dear, dear husband, confide wholly in me.”

“Oh Emily, had we met this morning. Cursed infatuation! Then, as if recollecting Mr. Franks’s insinuations, he continued,

“But you, madam, no doubt have been well amused during my absence.”

Emily could little surmise to what he alluded. She began to fear his senses were affected, and burst into tears.

Fitsmorton traversed the room in breathless agitation; then gazing stedfastly on Emily, he said,

“When a woman, in the absence of her

husband, can entertain, and be entertained, what credit is to be given to the joy she expresseth at his return?"

"I am totally ignorant to what you allude; if to have suffered all that mental wretchedness can inflict, is to be entertained, then indeed you are right in your conjectures:—for heaven's sake be explicit."

"Torture! madness! my brain is bursting! the breath of innocence, the bosom of chastity, might have soothed the agonies I endure,——but"

"This, Edward, is not a time to feel resentment at your unjust insinuations; you surely cannot, dare not, suspect me of any unworthy conduct. Your mind is hurt and irritated; and I can solicit you, with innocence and truth, to repose in my bosom your every care."

In hurried accents he asked her, who had dared to sleep at the house during his absence? who was the happy man so highly favoured?

“ Edward, (she replied,) did I not see that disappointment presses hard upon your mind, I should answer with the contempt your question merits. Our mutual friend, Dr. Leicester, was one night my welcome guest.”

“ Dr. Leicester ! (he exclaimed,) my own credulity has doubtless deceived me.” He then told her of his meeting with Franks, who had mentioned, in mere *badinage*, what he had, in the distracted state of his mind, taken up too seriously, and after reprobating his own unjust suspicions, he continued,

“ My dearest Emily, if any thing can alleviate my wretched situation, it is the idea that you still love me, that you pardon all my unkindness and folly.”

“ Oh, let us now and for ever have done with such a subject. (A momentary suspicion crossed her mind, that Franks was not guiltless of some design in his apparent *badinage*.) “ Dear Edward, appreciate

the love I bear you. Whatever be your future fate, remember it is mine also." Fitsmorton clasped her to his heart. Emily declared she could not exist under the pressure of such accumulating anxiety.

"If, Emily, (he replied,) the anxiety is so oppressive, what will prove the reality of misery? How will you bear up your agitated mind, when I tell you, that I am ruined beyond redemption, in every sense of the word: that I am disgraced, utterly disgraced for ever!

Emily faintly said, "Disgraced! impossible."

"By heaven 'tis true! Our boy may curse the existence of his father! my mother! even her gentle nature will remember this day with horror; and as to thee, oh Emily! how wilt thou endure trials so severe?"

"Some dreadful mystery hangs about your words; if, my dear Edward, I may unravel it, I guess that a fatal infatuation has made us beggars."

He groaned.

She continued. "And is this the mighty evil I am taught to fear? My love, I dread not poverty, if blessed with your returning confidence; I speak not the enthusiastic language of romance, but most willingly could I give up every indulgence and luxury, most willingly bend to any reverse of fortune, if not neglected by a husband,—ever the object of my tenderest love! Oh could I be assured that I have not been neglected for the sake of ——"

The words died upon her lips.

Fitsmorton looked up to heaven, in wild despair, saying :

"Surely, surely, thou art an angel! Emily, I swear by the God who made me, that your suspicions are groundless; how you became acquainted with the destination of the diamonds remains yet to be explained; as must also, at a future time, my folly, in being guilty of such extravagance; at present rest assured that it

proceeded from a disgraceful wager, made in an hour of intoxication; and that the woman who received the diamonds was 'the exclusive *chère amie* of another.'

"How light appears the loss of fortune to the loss of your affection! You may have been imprudent, but could I persuade you to leave London for one twelvemonth, all may yet be well."

He wildly said, "Alas! whither can we go?"

"To Fittsmorton Park, or any where that you shall best prefer."

Emily had touched the vibrating chord which agonised his every feeling. His countenance became ghastly, and in faltering accents he replied:—

"In a very short time Fittsmorton Park owns another master; my mother's fortune is involved.—Oh Emily, leave me to my fate!"

"Leave you! oh never." Then joyfully taking from a pocket-book the five thou-

sand pounds which she had received of Dr. Leicester, she put them into her husband's hands; he grasped them in silent amazement; and when she explained by what means she became possessed of them, he could only say :

“ Eternal Providence, for this I thank thee !”

“ Yes, Edward, (she returned,) we will receive it as the gift of heaven; this money will fully reimburse that part of your mother's property which rested in your hands; all other losses are comparatively light. Had you never been in possession of Fittmorton Park, my heart had still been yours.—Dear Edward, all will yet be well.”

“ Yes, when the upbraidings of a guilty conscience can be silenced; when your injuries and our infant's wrongs can be compensated.”

“ Abjure your errors, the mercy of heaven is unlimited. Our child cannot feel the deprivation of luxuries he never

80. THE PROFLIGATE MOTHER; OR,

minded him of the villain, who, by convincing him of his former credulity, and awakening unwarrantable suspicions that happiness was delusive, had unsettled his principles, and vitiated the purity of his taste and sentiments.

What a moment was this to receive the news of Dorville's arrival in England! The parcel of letters caught Fitsmorton's attention; he opened several, and read them, as if mechanically; when, taking up one, he recognized the hand-writing of Dorville.

Emily had just left the room, and was saved witnessing the dreadful expression of his countenance. The letter simply informed him that Dorville had that instant landed at Portsmouth; that he was well aware intelligence of his death had been prematurely circulated; mentioned the morning that he should arrive at the hotel in Berkley-square, where he entreated Fitsmorton to give him the meeting, that he

might prepare all the beloved family for his apparent resurrection; and that he would soon explain its mystery." Violent emotion, on the first perusal, agitated the trembling nerves of Fitsmorton. "Yes," he exclaimed; "I will meet thee, Dorville! and fatally shalt thou be remembered by all!" He concealed the letter ere Emily returned, and endeavoured to suppress his agonizing reflections. He told her that one of the letters demanded his attention early in the morning; that he must instantly write an answer; that he should be employed at his pen for an hour or two on some important business, and, with the most distressing feelings, but with assumed serenity, he entreated her to retire to rest, and that he would remain in her dressing-room until he had finished writing.

Dorville's letter had appointed the next morning, at an early hour, for his being in London. Fitsmorton therefore immedi-

ately sent the following letter to the hotel, to await his arrival :—

“ To recriminate is useless—facts are stubborn things : your deliberate villainy has proved my ruin. Chance, or whatever we are pleased to call it, has discovered to me the deceptive hypocrisy of a man I once called my friend. Your own conscience will best comprehend my meaning. These hasty lines will be given to you on your arrival at the hotel, and I shall be waiting to take the just vengeance which your conduct merits.”

He then appointed the place and hour with all necessary arrangements ; and, after having promised Emily to finish his writing as quickly as possible, she could not resist his earnest entreaties to be left to himself. Heroically as she had supported her spirits when wishing to give comfort to her husband, she now yielded to every depressive feeling ; and some time elapsed before she could gain composure enough to supplicate

the Disposer of all events for resolution and fortitude in this hour of trial. But when she reflected that her suspicions were groundless of Fitsmorton's infidelity, all other misfortunes appeared comparatively light; and any reverse of fortune she felt herself equal to submit to. Amidst her own sorrows, Mrs. Grosvenor's fate was ever a predominant subject; and sad were Emily's presentiments that remorse would convince her mother of the fallacy of her present pursuits.

When Fitsmorton was left to himself, he struggled to gain some degree of composure; but the variety of emotions which assailed him were for some time uncontrollable—he had panted for revenge.—The hour was near at hand, and he hailed it with ferocious joy; then suddenly starting with horror at the idea of embruing his hands in the blood of a fellow-creature, or of appearing himself at the awful tribunal of Heaven! But he again read Dorville's

etter, gazed on the fatal miniature, and feeling that his future life would be insupportable, from the certain approaches of disgraceful poverty, he considered existence as a burden, because it could no longer be supported with respectability and honour: he therefore immediately determined to write to Alfred Granby—that, whatever proved the result of the duel, the motives of his conduct might be elucidated.

The report of Dorville's death had originated from a man of the same name having died in India, and concurring circumstances fatally prevented all usual intercourse for two or three years with his friends in England. At one time, a packet of letters had been entrusted to a private hand, and never delivered; and he himself having been unexpectedly sent far up the country, the unfounded report of his death was not contradicted.

Fitsmorton's Letter to Alfred Granby.

“ Short is the time allotted to explain to you my motives for the rash step I am about to take. In a word, Granby, I am a ruined man!—ruined in fortune—in reputation—and in all that can make life estimable! I believe I have been wrong, but nothing can recal the past; and I am impelled, by an irresistible impulse, to follow the dictates of a well-grounded resentment.

“ You remember me, Granby, happy in my union with the object of my earliest love; and that our mutual friend Dorville was domesticated with generous and unbounded confidence! This man, under the disguise of friendship, laughed at my credulity, and alienated the affections of my wife!—of a being, on whose virtue and honour I would have staked my existence. Some little time ago, I found a letter in a *Cabinet* which had belonged to her, con-

fessing his attachment, accompanied by a miniature of himself, stamping conviction on this dreadful fact; that I had lived the dupe of that depravity! Conceive, if you can, the revolution my mind experienced! Time is now too precious to describe my feelings. Every resentment which insulted honour could feel, I felt! and I vowed, if ever fate gave me the power of revenge, it should be fully satiated. I will not excuse or palliate my total, nay, almost instantaneous neglect of domestic duties: but so it was—the smiles of Emily appeared only deceptive snares for my undoing; and the words “Such once was Mary Dalrymple!” concluded every mental warfare. Her child, who had been my solace in affliction, my joy in returning peace, became an object of detestation, and every vindictive passion raged with redoubled fury when Emily courted my notice for her little favourite.

“For refuge from feelings which con-

sumed me, I sought their oblivion in the midnight revel; in the circle of inebriation. The spirit of gaming soon overpowered my reasoning faculties, and the occupation which appeared at first a resource from the bitterness of reflection, became the engendered habit of my soul; and fortune, reputation, and peace, are now the fatal sacrifice! With hardened illiberality, I suspected Emily of deceit; and though her fair brow, and invariable rectitude of conduct, baffled suspicion, and set distrust at defiance; I repulsed her every endearing wish for returning confidence, and left her to mourn my unkindness in solitude. Every little accidental occurrence I converted into proofs, strong as holy writ. And I even sometimes doubted the delicacy of her affection, because she ever welcomed me with smiles, nor reproached my neglect with harshness. Granby! I linger on the subject, but I must be brief.

My paternal estate will soon be in the possession of another!

“ My senses seem to have wandered. I am now more composed. Dorville is just arrived in England. You remember the report of his death; it was unfounded. By heaven! Granby, he has written to me, expressing his joy at the prospect of meeting my family; and he must expect to meet the partner of his guilt, he cannot have heard of her death. Does not his present conduct reach the farthest mark that hypocrisy ever attempted? And shall I permit this man to enjoy so fatal a triumph? To consider me as the convenient dupe of his unparalleled deceit? If I fall, do you and my sister comfort my poor distracted mother! Palliate the follies I have been guilty of; and let her find in you a son. Explain to Emily every circumstance; nothing will then add to her affliction! I have slighted an invaluable

able jewel, because the lustre of one I once possessed was false and deceptive! If I fall! these words are indeed of solemn import: But is not the grave the surest refuge for suffering humanity? Dreadful reflections will intrude. I cannot silence a voice which seems to pronounce the soul immortal!

“This shall be forwarded to you at the hour of my meeting Dorville; and should his pistol prove successful, then! oh, then! conceal from idle curiosity the sad story of Mary Dalrymple; let not her family now shed the bitter tears of shame! Emily will ever shield and protect the little innocent object I have neglected. As to my boy, my beggared injured boy! may he live to prove a blessing to his mother; and when her bosom can no longer be his only sanctuary, be you to him a father!

“My sister? you whom I have ever loved, farewell! Be grateful for your happy lot, safe in the asylum of an husband's protect-

ing arms; you are far removed from the vanities and follies of life! Granby, I enclose for you the letter, and the miniature.

“ I have traversed the apartments in gloomy meditation; I have been stationed at the door of the nursery; I caught the sound of my little Edward’s voice, as if struggling with the power of sleep.—I longed to press him to my bosom; but I could not command my feelings; the agitation I endured might have aroused suspicion. I breathed a fervent prayer to heaven for his future welfare.

“ Emily has fallen into an unquiet slumber; tears are still visible on her cheeks. Had I gazed much longer, I should have wished the eventful challenge recalled. I should have permitted this fell destroyer of innocence to escape my vengeance: for not the present object of my tender affections, gives fairer promise of perfection than did once the unfortunate Mary Dalrymple!

“ Granby, farewell ! What a still and solemn hour ! the striking of the clock vibrates like my departing knell ! It seems as if, ‘ through the still globe’s awful solitude, no being wakes but me.’

“ Once more farewell !

“ EDWARD FITSMORTON.”

Fitsmorton took every proper precaution to secure the five thousand pounds, to reimburse his mother’s property. He then endeavoured to hold communion with his Maker ; but ever vain must be that penitence which leads not to a renunciation of error ! At the moment of supplication to heaven, he was reconciling to his conscience an action which, however the sophism of man may allow, must receive condemnation at the awful tribunal of God.

CHAP. XII.

WHEN Mrs. Fitsmorton left Emily, accompanied by Catherine Walker, after placing her under the protection of a person she could confide in,—ever active in the cause of benevolence, she sought an interview with Mrs. Rebecca Franks, whose violence of manner, and unfeeling invectives, bespoke not the goodness either of her head or heart; but throughout the reprobation of Catherine's conduct, Mrs. Fitsmorton charitably inferred, that the poor girl's dereliction from virtue was more owing to the arts of her seducer than to her own depravity of heart. Mrs. Rebecca Franks was very easily persuaded to part peaceably with Catherine Walker, and Mrs. Fitsmorton took her leave, more than ever determined to save this victim from farther destruction.

To Mr. Franks, she wrote as follows :

“ SIR,

“ I am the protectress of a deceived unhappy girl : your own conscience will point out in what manner I became acquainted with your proceedings ; how I know the dishonourable part you have acted, by that object of compassion, Sir George Sinclair ; and also the deception of your conduct towards my son, and his unsuspecting wife. To endeavour to work upon your feelings, were, I believe, a very arduous task ; but of this be assured, that if you do not make a proper provision for an ill-fated object which may soon see light, your character and nefarious proceedings shall be duly exposed.

There is still virtue enough left in the world, to hold your conduct in detestation, on Catherine Walker’s account ; but what will touch you more nearly, would be the exposure of your unjust proceedings, in

money matters, with Sir George Sinclair; and your having dared to trifle with the angelic purity of Emily Fitsmorton. A word to the wise is sufficient; and that you possess worldly wisdom, there can be little doubt. Let me, however, hint to you, that you have probably escaped being the murderer of her whose innocence you have sacrificed; together with the unborn evidence of her shame: for lost, as the poor girl thought she was, to all virtuous society, brutally repulsed by the man who had betrayed her, she had nearly fled from accumulating misery to the silence of the grave.

“Lives there a human being who could have felt himself the cause of such a catastrophe and not have been eternally haunted by a guilty conscience, if he could still have pursued the gay career of vice, and marked out objects for destruction, the hour of retribution would yet arrive, and the approach of death convince him that conscience sleepeth not for ever.

“ Should your unhappy child see light, secure to it a proper provision. The mother shall never condescend to ask charity from her betrayer.

“ M. FITSMORTON.”

When Franks received this letter, he was preparing to join a party of pleasure; he threw the paper into the fire, and endeavoured to suppose the contents were only an exaggeration of a weak old woman's fears, and being assured that Catherine Walker was in good hands, not likely to call upon him for support, he dismissed the subject from his mind, without farther prosing or consideration.

Fitsmorton passed the remaining hours which were to elapse before the eventful meeting, as most men do, (notwithstanding the boasted heroism of philosophy,) who are about to take their chance of quitting this state of existence, or of being guilty of the death of a fellow-creature. The feverish state of his mind little abated by

the wretched scenes fancy had pourtrayed, in delusive and appalling dreams; and he arose with the break of day, and in the calmness of a despairing mind, finished some preparatory and necessary arrangements. Emily, in wakeful solicitude, urged his speedy return, and fearful of arousing suspicion in her mind, he tore himself away in haste, and with unmeaning plausibility promised every thing she wished.

When Dorville received Fitsmorton's letter, the words, "Our secret then is discovered," fell from his lips: he read it again, and his astonishment at the severity it expressed, redoubled. When Dorville left England, Fitsmorton had lent him a considerable sum of money: circumstances had certainly prevented a prompt, or punctual payment; but now returned as he was, high in military reputation, with a large and independant fortune, by the unexpected death of an uncle, from whose interest he had been induced to go to India,

now that he had it in his power to account for former remissness, and to repay his friend with heart-felt gratitude. How repulsive to his feelings was the hostile tenor of Fitsmorton's letter! But deliberation was of little avail, he would meet him and endeavour to conciliate all matters.

Overpowered with the tenderest emotions, Dorville approached the appointed place, and in tremulous agitation he exclaimed, when he saw his friend, "And is it thus we meet, Fitsmorton?"

Fitsmorton, who construed his faltering accents and trepidation of manner into conscious guilt, replied, "Dorville, I refer you to the contents of my letter, I can only repeat, that recrimination is useless."

"Will you not hear my justification?"

"Justification! deliberate hypocrite! confession would better suit thy present state; but this is no time for parlying, every thing is arranged. The exigency of

our case must waive the ceremony of being attended by seconds."

"Fitsmorton, I cannot fight you; answer me some important questions."

"I cannot hold converse with the man from whom I have received such unmerited injuries."

"One moment more for deliberation."

"Cowards only can deliberate."

"Have a care, Fitsmorton; and do I live to hear this from you?"

"Mean pitiful coward! for he who could steal the affections of a virtuous woman, and plunge her into misery, is unworthy the name of man. You now understand me, Dorville."

"On my soul, I do not; I cannot raise my arm against the —."

Fitsmorton interrupted him, "No evasion, sir! Your character disgraces humanity."

"On the honour of a soldier, you are wrong, Fitsmorton."

“Hypocrite!”

“By heaven! this is beyond endurance.”

Fitsmorton, hurried by impetuosity of spirit, continued the language of defiance, without expressing in plainer terms the cause of his resentment, and again urging Dorville beyond forbearance, the latter could not brook such repeated insults, and they fired.—They both fell. Fitsmorton fainted from a violent effusion of blood.—

Dorville thought he was gone for ever!

The surgeon and his assistant soon afforded relief.—Dorville had the power to say,

“Oh Fitsmorton, why didst thou tempt thy fate?” then perceiving in him a gleam of returning life, he added, “Whilst recollec-

tion is left me, let us exchange forgiveness; if I die, tell your dear sister, tell my beloved Mary—” He could explain

no farther, and Fitsmorton, though unable to answer with coherence, felt a conviction of the truth flash upon his bewil-

dered; senses he groaned, and faintly ejaculated, "My sister!"

Here the surgeon interfered; Dorville was taken care of, and Fitsmorton in a senseless state conveyed to his own house.

Emily had arisen in the morning, suffering from the real anguish of her heart, yet determined to exert every effort of fortitude to support her husband under his present distresses. She shrunk not from the painful task, nor feared to encounter any change of circumstances, provided he did not give way to despondency, by feeling too acutely the follies and imprudencies he had been guilty of. "By degrees, (said she,) I will endeavour to reconcile him to the deprivation of every accustomed luxury; I will lead him back to domestic happiness, which surely is independant of any local circumstance, or ambitious pursuits."

The breakfast things were just removed, and Emily continuing her mental reveries,

exclaimed, "How unlucky, that my poor Edward is now obliged to be from home, when I have a thousand plans to propose for our future comfort; but how shall we break this sad change in our affairs to dear Mrs. Fitsmorton? How will Mary and her husband sympathise with us all."

Then recollecting that Fitsmorton had assured her the business he had to transact would engage him but an hour or two, she determined to await his return as patiently as possible. She wished for her friend Miss Travers, who with Mr. Macartny was staying at Alfred Granby's house, but on a moment's consideration, her regrets appeared too selfish to be indulged in, as Mary was hourly expecting to be confined, and Miss Travers had always promised to be with her at the expected period. She intended to write to them, but dreaded any imprudent communication might unexpectedly reach Mrs. Granby.

Proper accommodation and assistance were procured for Captain Dorville, and the surgeon attended Fismorton home. Emily heard an unusual bustle in the hall. The surgeon learning that his apparently dying patient was a married man, hastened up the stairs to prepare his wife for the distressing scene. Emily at the same moment opened the drawing-room door, and catching the sound of an agonising groan, was rushing out of the room, had not the surgeon resolutely prevented her, till he had related the mournful tale. She neither spoke nor wept, but escaping from her humane informer, she met in one instant the dreadful sight, and earnestly entreated that no one would attend to her, but give every possible assistance to her beloved husband. His eyes were sometimes vacantly fixed, and sometimes closed, as if for ever. When every thing was arranged, as much as possible, for his convenience and comfort, she requested the

surgeon's opinion; he told her, after a necessary operation, he should be a better judge, but that at present, he did not apprehend any immediate danger.

Emily faintly repeated, "immediate danger." The ball was extracted, and hopes were pronounced of her husband's recovery. He had called upon her name; oppressed nature could no longer be restrained; she fainted in the arms of her attendants. When she recovered, Mrs. Fitsmorton became her great anxiety; — how should she break this sad event to her? Something she knew must be decided upon, and fortunately at this moment Dr. Leicester, who was making one of his accustomed visits to London, knocked at Fitsmorton's door. When he heard from the servants the situation of the family, he wrote upon his card the following words, and desired it might be given to Mrs. Fitsmorton: "Can you see your sympathising friend?" She ordered him to

be admitted immediately; their mournful meeting may easily be imagined: commonplace arguments of consolation were not offered on one side, nor useless and despairing lamentations repeated on the other. He wished to remain in the house, and to prolong his stay in town; Emily gratefully accepted the proposition. She then expressed her anxiety about Mrs. Fitsmorton, and Dr. Leicester undertook the painful task of breaking the sad intelligence to her.

After endeavouring to give every possible consolation to Emily, he said: "I will go to Mrs. Fitsmorton directly, my dear child; and do you return to the pillow of your unfortunate husband.—Heaven grant he may yet be spared to you; and that this dark cloud may quickly pass away. It is indeed a bitter trial! the God of all comfort be your support!

By Dr. Leicester's kind and considerate attentions, Mrs. Fitsmorton received the

afflictive news with tolerable composure. She would return with him to Emily, and after the first violent emotions at seeing her son in such a situation, she exerted every effort to soothe and assist Emily, in her painful attendance.

Towards the evening, Fitsmorton became delirious, and danger was apprehended from the increase of his fever; the late irritable state of his mind, and the irregular life he had led, contributing much to every unfavourable symptom: he talked of Alfred Granby, and of a letter of importance, of a miniature, and frequently called upon his sister for an explanation of the mystery. Poor Emily listened in fearful sorrow; and when he, with apparent rationality, earnestly entreated her forgiveness for all his neglect, calling her his love, his injured Emily, she was often obliged to leave the room, in uncontrollable distress and sorrow.

When she understood from the medical

attendants, that Dorville was the name of her husband's adversary, nothing could exceed her astonishment. She had heard his death spoken of, and lamented by all the family, long before Mary Fitzmorton became Mrs. Granby; and had ever heard him mentioned with almost enthusiastic regard and friendship. The next day, when she was consulting with Dr. Leicester on the propriety of sending an express to Alfred Granby, he arrived in town, in consequence of the letter he had received from Fitzmorton. Dorville's danger hourly encreased, but his senses were not affected; and when he heard of Dr. Leicester's intimacy in the Fitzmorton family, he expressed an earnest wish to see him. Dr. Leicester willingly assented; and Dorville, as well as his condition would permit, enquired, with tremulous impatience, after the whole family, not even knowing of the death of the first Mrs. Edward Fitzmorton; and when he learnt that Mary had long

been married, the agitation he experienced brought on an alarming faintness, from which he was with difficulty recovered. Dr. Leicester in vain advised him to defer farther conversation, but he only answered: "What would be hurtful to the sick, could not affect the dying man. Fain would I learn by what strange infatuation the man whom I loved and considered as a brother, met me as his bitterest foe? How unfortunate were the circumstances which have precluded a reciprocal communication, and my death appearing properly authenticated, has doubtless been the cause of Mary Fitsmorton's marriage.—I do not now wish to live."

Dr. Leicester endeavoured to tranquillise his mind.

"You argue, sir, as you ought to do; but mysterious indeed are the ways of heaven! How ardently have I anticipated the moment of arrival in my native land. I did arrive in health and safety; and in-

stead of clasping to my faithful bosom the lovely object of my heart's first attachment, I was compelled to meet hostilely her brother, my dearest friend; and this circumstance, had she not effectually barred our union, would probably have separated us for ever! Sir, I am reconciled to death. I would only know the motives of Fitsmorton's conduct.—Married again, say you?"

In vain Dr. Leicester entreated him to cease every heart-rending enquiry; he would continue.

"Tell me, dear sir, is the present Mrs. Fitsmorton worthy to be the successor of an angel? And is my Mary happily married?"

A contrariety of feelings agitated his frame, when Dr. Leicester answered in the affirmative.

"I cannot die in peace, (Dorville continued,) unless I am acquainted with the infatuation which has misled Fitsmorton;

he is of a noble and generous nature, and could not wantonly have sported, either with his own life, or with mine."

Dr. Leicester promised he should have every satisfactory account he required; and then urged him to endeavour to gain some degree of composure.

"My dear sir, (he answered,) I am composed. I know that I cannot live many days. I am resigned to the will of heaven!"

The resignation and fortitude of Dorville much interested Dr. Leicester in his fate; he left him to investigate the cause of the duel, saying, as he arose to depart: "May the Almighty continue to you his gracious support; and remember, my dear sir, that a good conscience renders every evil supportable, and that your awful situation loses every terror, from the soul's resting on the Almighty with humble hope and confidence. Depend upon seeing me again as soon as possible."

When Alfred Granby received Fitsmorton's letter and packet, he was enjoying the comforts of a social domestic circle. Miss Travers was endeavouring to enliven the drooping spirits of Mrs. Granby; playfully anticipating the arrival of a young stranger, who would put to flight all melancholy ideas. Mr. Martney and Granby were deeply engaged in a game of chess, and heeded not the entrance of a servant, till he put the packet into his master's hands. "Good heaven! (Mary exclaimed,) it is my brother's hand-writing. Dear Alfred, quickly open it, something of consequence must have occurred."

He opened the packet, and the miniature falling from it, Mary, without waiting for her husband's answer, whether she should unfold it, tore off the envelope, and beheld the miniature of Dorville! At this instant Granby finding the contents of his letter very serious, took up a candle, and went into his study.

Mary gave a faint scream, and became insensible to all around her; when she recovered, she desired to be assisted to her own apartment; but all the tender enquiries of Miss Travers could not procure from her any explanation on the subject. When Granby had read the letter, he came into Mary's dressing-room; and asked her for the miniature. Pale and trembling she pointed to the table. And when he considerably prepared her for the necessity of his setting out immediately for London, she burst into tears.

"Your brother is ill, my dear Mary, be assured that no trifling circumstance should induce me to leave you."

"I entreat you, Alfred, (she wildly answered,) to let me read the contents of that packet."

"Had you not better, my love, wait till I return? You shall hear from me the moment I arrive in town."

"No, no," was all she could articulate.

He entreated her to be composed.

"I will indeed be composed, but I am sure Edward is very ill, perhaps he is dead! and, merciful Heaven! how came that miniature in his possession?"

"Heaven forbid, Mary, that your brother should be dead! And are you sure, my love, you can now hear of his perplexities, his misfortunes, with proper composure and fortitude?"

"Alfred, think what I should suffer, were you to leave me in this state of suspense."

"Then arm yourself, my dearest life, with resolution; think how my happiness depends upon you, and perhaps the existence of our expected treasure. Endeavour to subdue all violent agitation, whilst you peruse your brother's letter. Miss Travers will remain with you. I must make a few necessary arrangements for my immediate departure;" and with repeated expressions of solicitude and ten-

derness, he motioned for Macartney to accompany him, and they left the room together.

On returning to the dressing-room, they found Mary fainting in the arms of her friend. Granby was nearly distracted. To leave her in so critical a situation was torture to his mind! Fismorton perhaps dying! or if he had escaped all danger from the duel, to what depths of misery might his feelings lead him! He endeavoured to assist in the recovery of Mary, who soon assured him she was better,—she was quite well; urged him to hasten to her brother; that the contents of his letter had indeed affected her; that he should hear of her almost as soon as he arrived in London; again, and again assuring him that she felt quite well. Her hurried accents and wildness of manner at the same time contradicting the assurances her tongue uttered. Much tender altercation on his part ensued, but at

length he tore himself away, and was immediately on the road to London. He travelled all night, and reached Fitsmorton's house early on the following morning. It may well be imagined with what breathless impatience his first enquiries were made, and with what emotions he heard that Fitsmorton's fever had alarmingly increased, and that there was but little hope of Dorville's recovery. Emily clung to him in speechless agony, as to her husband's dearest friend; loss of fortune, every thing now appeared trivial, when put in competition with the idea of his death.

Dr. Leicester and Mr. Granby conversed for some time on the mournful subject, the former repeating Dorville's incoherent expressions, which distressed and alarmed Granby more than he chose to acknowledge; and when Dr. Leicester had read Fitsmorton's letter, the look

which they exchanged spoke volumes to the heart of each.

By the first post came the following letter, from Mrs. Granby to her mother :—

To Mrs. Fitsmorton.

“ MY DEAREST MOTHER,

“ The feelings I experience at the idea of confessing the reprehensible part I have acted, can only proceed from the reflection that I may soon quit this mortal life, and from my sincere and heart-felt repentance. I must briefly retrace the days which are gone, I must wound your bosom by avowing the duplicity of my conduct.

“ My beloved mother ! you well remember Dorville’s intimacy in our family. He soon distinguished me with peculiar regard, and by degrees our attachment became mutual, but alas, he wanted the essential recommendation of my father ; he wanted fortune. Let the fascination of his manners, and the uncommon worth of his cha-

racter, excuse my partiality; too soon we loved with all the enthusiasm of a first and-virtuous passion; and but for my entreaties, he would openly have confessed his love for me to my father; have braved his displeasure, and perhaps waited for happier prospects. In one of these tender expostulations, Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton unexpectedly surprised us; for hitherto, even she had been a stranger to our attachment. In vain she talked of the imprudence of my conduct, and with tears solicited me to disclose our situation to you, my mother, and to her husband; we had bound her to secrecy. I was inexorable to her entreaties, for I wished to save you uneasiness; not considering how my want of confidence might eventually prove the cause of mutual wretchedness.

“Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton, won by our prayers and entreaties, against her better judgment afforded Dorville every possible opportunity of seeing me, and in her pre-

sence we often vowed everlasting love, and enjoyed a short interval of happiness. The sternness of my father's temper would at times put to flight all visionary prospects of felicity; but the delusions of hope oftener prevailed; and we rested on each other's faith, with every presage of being one day happily united.

"At length Dorville was obliged to inform me of his destination to India; the pangs which then rent my bosom never were forgotten. His tenderness when inflicting the stroke, and his own suppressed emotions, have ever been alike remembered. Just at this period, a temporary separation gave rise to a fatal mistake; and hence the custom of having my letters directed to Mrs. Edward Fitzmorton. He had long promised me his picture, and by some unavoidable delay, it was not finished till after we had taken our last distressing farewell, and he then sent it, accompanied by a few lines to me, under cover to my

friend. She received it, I have little doubt, on the very day she was so suddenly seized with the alarming illness; and having safely locked it in her cabinet, she never had an opportunity of speaking to me alone, till the delirium of her senses forbade all rational communication. I attributed my not receiving the miniature to every cause but the right. But it was long a great source of disappointment.

“Error is sometimes punished in this life. What hours of misery I endured after Dorville’s departure! Many a wakeful night have I passed listening to the wind; and in supplicating the Almighty to bless and to preserve him. How often have I observed you watch in silence every turn of my countenance, attributing to indisposition my apparent langour, which only proceeded from the wretched state of my mind.

“I erroneously termed my resolution of secrecy a proper firmness of temper; and

I determined to await, in romantic despair, some change of my wretched destiny.— Ever enthusiastic in my attachments, Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton's death was a severe and bitter stroke. Sweet soul! the tenderness of her nature had yielded to the indulgence of my wishes, against the conviction of her deliberate judgment. That I should have been the means of tarnishing her fair fame in the eyes of my beloved brother!—That I should have caused him to risk his life in an imaginary resentment—Merciful Heaven!—My senses are, at this moment, so bewildered, that no expected bodily sufferings can equal the sufferings of my mind! My brother—or Dorville—may be—what would I say?—Oh my mother! * * * * *

* * * * *

“I am now calmer—I must proceed, whilst strength is lent me for the painful task.

“When Mrs. Edward Fitsmorton died,

I more unrestrainedly wept the sorrows of my heart; and though your dear bosom appeared the safest, surest refuge, the dread of my father being made acquainted with our attachment, withheld every proper confidence in your indulgence. I never heard from Dorville. Loving him as I did, Ideas the most absurd and romantic haunted my imagination; but the thought of his premeditated neglect or infidelity never entered my mind.

“When Emily was introduced into our family, she appeared the counter-part of the friend I had so truly mourned; and, at this period, had not the report of Dorville’s death been fatally received, I think I should have entrusted her with my distressing perplexities; but I soon determined to bury in silence my duplicity and affliction.

“What I suffered at his supposed death can now little avail to dwell upon! nor dare I investigate my present feelings. Granby deserves a happier fate!

“ In every altercation which passed between Edward and my father, I rejoiced that I had not subjected myself to similar uneasiness, for I well knew nothing could induce him to approve of my attachment to Dorville, on account of his profession and of his want of fortune.

“ On my brother's marriage, something like cheerfulness visited my mind; for I loved Emily with the fondest affection. And now came the bitterest trial—the hardest to endure!—Alfred Granby offered me his hand and heart. You know, dearest mother, how strangely I appeared to receive his addresses! How I evaded them, till excuses were useless; I knew my father would oblige me to marry him; for fortune, connections, character, on Granby's part, were all unexceptionable.

“ I requested time for consideration.—I told him, and Heaven knows I told him truly! that there was no man living I preferred to him. He attributed my repug-

nance to timidity. He gave me his whole heart, whilst mine, alas! was buried in the grave with Dorville!

“ Dear Granby! My mother! I dare not write to him! but do you tell him every thing. Oh tell him, also, that his tenderness of conduct, his many virtues——What would I add?——Dorville, or my brother, may have already become the victim of my folly! And then could there exist such a wretch as the wife of Granby! Wife! did I say?—almost a mother!

“ The chaos of my mind no longer permits me to dwell on the subject:——Were you now with me!——But, be prepared for the worst which can happen. I have had such strange feelings since the dreadful shock——

“ Pray tell Granby I cannot write to him: and, if I leave him a daughter——

“ Adieu, my mother!——I can no more——

“ MARY GRANBY.”

Mrs. Fitsmorton received the above letter just as the afflicted party had partaken of a mournful breakfast. The variation of her countenance was observed by all; and Granby requested to know, with great agitation, if the packet contained a letter for him. Mrs. Fitsmorton, knowing that any concealment was not practicable, answered, "Dear Alfred, there is no other letter. Mary is at present well; and, as Edward appears rather better, I mean to set out immediately for your house."

She hesitated; and Granby becoming uncontrollably agitated, said, "He was sure Mary was ill; he would accompany Mrs. Fitsmorton, to satisfy himself as to her real situation, and then return immediately with Macartney to London." "But do, dear Madam, tell me!" he continued, "is Mary still up? or are we disappointed of our dearest hopes? I can bear any thing, provided my wife is doing well. She may have prematurely suffered from the shock

of Edward's letter. For God's sake, dearest mother, speak to me! your silence is most dreadful!"

Mrs. Fismorton put the letter into Dr. Leicester's hands, and recommended Granby to retire with him for the perusal, adding, "My dear Alfred, be lenient—be patient—Mary is still your wife."

With tremulous anxiety he followed Dr. Leicester into the library. Granby scarcely breathed, from the excess and contrariety of his feelings; but, covering his eyes with his hands, and leaning over the Doctor's chair, he listened in mournful silence to the contents of Mary's letter. When Dr. Leicester had concluded, Granby exclaimed, "And this is the being I have cherished as the solace of my existence? Great God, how I have loved her!"

"Endeavour to compose yourself, my dear Sir; Mrs. Granby must be the greatest sufferer, because self-reproach will intrude upon her mind. Consider the con-

solation and attentions she now requires. She has acted wrongly in some instances, but not designedly.

“No one can form a just idea of my present feelings. Fear not, good Dr. Leicester, from me any rigorous proceedings. Unhappy misguided Mary!”

“Sir, you know not how I prized the fancied treasure of her heart! What a critical time is this for her to endure such agitation of mind! Fly, dear Sir, and expedite Mrs. Fitsmorton’s departure. Methinks I shall be more at peace to know that Mary rests on the bosom of her mother. All my visionary happiness here for ever ends!”

“Recollect, dear Sir, that Mrs. Granby is innocent of any intentional evil; and that, though unfortunate circumstances have occurred, her mind has ever been the seat of purity.”

“Oh yes, all this I do remember. I also remember her frequent dejection of

spirits. Can it be possible that I have only grasped the shadow of happiness!—Too well, too well, can I now account for that cold timidity of manner which would have declined my addresses; and which, since our marriage, has only been conquered by reason and duty.”

“ You must go alone to the unfortunate Dorville; I can never see him more.”

Dr. Leicester promised every thing possible for his satisfaction, and deemed it wise to leave him to himself for a short time.

Mrs. Fitsmorton was soon on the road to her daughter; and Dr. Leicester kept his appointment with the unfortunate Dorville.

It were unnecessary here to dwell on the many unpleasant scenes which passed in respect to money affairs. Creditors were pouring in their accounts from every quarter. Debts of honour, and debts of dishonour, from the money-lending tribe,

proclaimed the ruined situation of Fitts-morton's affairs, who lay insensible to the miseries and perplexities with which he was surrounded.

Dr. Leicester's interview with Dorville was solemn and affecting. A mortification was expected; and he felt his end approaching; the faculties of his mind were clear and unimpaired; and he drew from Dr. Leicester a circumstantial account of every distressing event.

He wept when he spoke of Mary, and pathetically lamented the situation of her brother.

"But tell him, Sir," he continued, "that I probably should have acted as he has done, under the same circumstances and provocations: tell him, with my dying breath, I forgive—I love him." Then pausing a few moments, he exclaimed, "But what consolation can be afforded to Mary? She was my first, my only love! She will sink under this trial: yet she is

the wife of another ! So well do I know her heart, that, being the primary cause of my death, and perhaps of her brother's, it will overwhelm her with such despair, that life to her can hardly be desirable.

“ We must leave the issue of events,” replied Dr. Leicester, “ to a wise, to a never-failing Providence. If the trial is great, the strength of God, operating on the human mind, will still be greater. Arrows abjured and repented of, will, sooner or later, bestow peace on the truly-penitent.”

Dorville was exhausted ; he could only say, “ To speak peace to the troubled soul, and to promise the reward of true repentance, proclaim your godlike mission ; trust me I will yet be revenged.”

Dr. Leicester was about to deprecate the idea of revenge ; but the unfortunate sufferer had fainted. Attributing, therefore, the expression to a temporary delirium, he left Dorville in the care of Felix,

a faithful black servant, and sent immediately for medical advice, intending to return again as soon as opportunity offered.

Fitsmorton's fever abated; the wound in his side wore a favourable appearance; and little danger was apprehended for his life: but as his bodily sufferings lessened, his mental sufferings increased, and a new stroke of distress soon overwhelmed his mind with unavailing remorse and deep despair. He had insisted on being conveyed to Dorville's bed-side; every thing was arranged for the mournful interview; and Fitsmorton fancied he should feel more composed when he had received the forgiveness of his friend; but alas! this satisfaction was forbidden! — Dorville breathed his last in the arms of Dr. Leicester, on the evening previous to the expected meeting.

CHAP. V.

MRS. FITSMORTON met her daughter with emotions better felt than described. She found her recovering from a serious alarm of the approaching eventful hour. Her self-accusations, the forgiveness she solicited from her mother; her dread of seeing Granby, and above all, the distressing anxiety she felt for the fate of her brother and Dorville, excited Mrs. Fitsmorton's tenderest sympathy; and gave rise to every sad apprehension for her safety. At length the news arrived of Dorville's death, and of the dreadful situation Fitsmorton was reduced to, from the remorse and despondency of his mind. Unfortunately the servant gave the letter to Mary, whilst Mrs. Fitsmorton was making some family arrangements; and nothing could prevent her being made acquainted with its

contents, which occasioned such violent emotions, that she was obliged to be conveyed to her bed ; and after many hours of extreme danger and suffering, gave birth to a female infant. She remained insensible to the new-born blessing, and in a few days was lost to all recollection. Poor Mrs. Fitsmorton, who had supplicated heaven for her life, now hung over her in speechless agony ; and but for the exertions of Macartney and Miss Travers, she must have yielded to the pressure of this affliction. Granby, aroused by Mary's alarming situation, and much affected by the death of Dorville, left London, and hastened home with proper medical assistance. When he beheld the child of Mary, the child he had anticipated with the fondest expectations of delight, his emotions were uncontrollable.

Mrs. Fitsmorton decided to remain with her daughter, though nearly distracted when reflecting on the critical situation of her son.

Granby and Macartney hastened to London. Fitsmorton had relapsed, and they encountered scenes equally mournful and distressing. Emily bore her part in them with every sense of the acutest feeling, but generally with apparent resignation. How often does the tale of fiction describe scenes between the suffering patient and the weeping friend; neither are prayers and exhortations wanting from the distressed mother or affectionate wife, to console and soothe the dear object apparently on the bed of death. Such heroism belonged not to Emily; in silence and in sorrow, she administered to the wants of her husband, and in silence and in sorrow only, could she lift up her heart to supplicate heaven for his recovery.

A few hours before Dorville's death, he requested to see Dr. Leicester, and putting into his hands a sealed packet, gave it to him, as his last will and testament. Little conversation passed between them:

his last words were, "Tell Mary we shall meet in heaven! that I die in peace with all mankind; that I die in the hope of future happiness."

Dr. Leicester was endeavouring to persuade him to join in the prayers of the church, but his approaching dissolution forbade every such exertion; and after lying for some time insensible to all around him, he expired in the arms of Dr. Leicester.

Although the mercy of heaven be unlimited, this awful and impressive scene spoke the inefficacy and folly of trusting to a death-bed repentance; when corporeal vigour is fled, and the mind is sunk in listless apathy from the sufferings of exhausted nature.

Dorville's will was opened, it consisted of a very few lines; he divided his fortune between Edward Fitsmorton, and the first child of Mrs. Granby, if it were a female; if a son, and there were other children,

the property was to be equally divided amongst them; giving this reason for his wishes, that if Mary's eldest child proved to be a girl, she might hereafter be united to Fitsmorton's eldest son. He provided comfortably for his black servant, Felix; and remembered Dr. Leicester, by requesting him to accept a valuable diamond ring. To Mrs. Fitsmorton and Emily, he left all the valuable presents he had intended for Mary Fitsmorton.

This unfortunate young man gave the earliest promise of every amiable quality that could adorn and dignify human nature. Serious and rational pursuits ever engaged his attention; he possessed the gifts of genius and of intellect. He was an honour to the profession he had chosen, and his example ever evinced, that bravery is not incompatible with humanity. His uncle, who had long resided in India, always gave him to understand that his profession must be his dependence. But with the

caprice incident to age and infirmity, or from reasons useless to investigate, when he died left Dorville sole heir to his immense and accumulating property. To Mary Fitsmorton, (the constant and beloved object of his heart,) he now looked forward, for the completion of his happy prospects. Every obstacle to their union appeared to be removed ; but the sanguine anticipation of ideal bliss was fated never to be realized.

Fitsmorton was again pronounced out of danger. Yet nothing could tranquillise his mind, and the torture of an accusing conscience seemed daily to increase. His murdered friend!—his unfortunate sister! so haunted his imagination, that even Emily, on whom his heart had lately rested with the fondest affection, could sometimes only weep upon his bosom in tender despondency.

Granby returned to Mrs. Fitsmorton to endeavour to support her in the painful

task she was undergoing. And it was satisfactory to hear from every medical opinion, that Mary would eventually be perfectly restored to her health and senses. The child whom Emily had kindly sheltered in her own nursery, in spite of every attention and care, began alarmingly to decline. A wet-nurse was deemed the only chance for its well-doing; and at length it was settled that Catherine Walker, who was still the joint care of Mrs. Fitsmorton and Emily, should undertake the office. She had brought into the world an infant, who lived but a few days, and she gratefully became the preserver of Granby's unfortunate child.

Mrs. Fitsmorton answered some cruel letters from her friends, and soon reconciled all parties. This of course contributed to give peace to Catherine's mind, who whilst she was thus respectably cherished and protected, shuddered with horror at the fate she had escaped, and formed every

good resolve to continue in the path of virtue, which she had so providentially regained.

In due time, Fitsmorton recovered his health, but the voice of conscience still spoke daggers to his heart; he dragged on a joyless existence, and felt unworthy of the blessings which were again surrounding him. Proper care had been taken to settle his affairs. And he determined, by the most rigorous economy, to prevent his children from feeling the effects of his own reprehensible conduct. He soon resolved to leave London, to seclude himself in some retired part of the world, and to indulge in the misery of his own reflections. He would let Fitsmorton Park, he would not have it restored to himself, as the gift of his murdered friend; but when his child was of an age to take possession of the estate, it should again be restored to the family. Thus thought and reasoned Fitsmorton in the hour of gloomy despon-

dency ; and he would frequently exclaim, when Emily endeavoured to soothe and re-assure his mind :

“ And can you still follow the fate of such a wretch as I am ? Will you administer to a mind diseased, and relinquish all the comforts and pleasures of society, for one dead, for ever dead to all worldly intercourse ? Impetuosity of feeling has undone me ; I took into my hand the sword of retribution, and most fatally has the point recoiled upon my own bosom. Oh Emily, the image of my murdered friend is ever before me ! ”

“ Cease, dearest Edward, to encourage such heart-breaking reflections. You were misled by the deceptive evidence of unmerited injuries. Wide is the mark between deliberate guilt, and the errors incidental to human nature. I now feel too acutely to arrange my ideas on this sad subject. I trust I shall soon be more

composed to speak comfort to your soul; but of this be assured, we are bound by one fate, and that, whilst existence is allowed me, it is only of value for your dear sake."

"Emily, I then derive one cordial drop in the bitter cup of life, from your tender sympathy. What blessings have I thrown away, what mercies have I slighted!"

Every thing was soon arranged for their removal from London, and a cottage in South Wales was to become their future residence. And as every species of affliction imagines that change of scene, and change of objects, will prove a salutary relief, Fitsmorton hailed his departure from London in gloomy and abstracted silence; he fancied that the wild scenery of nature would accord with the feelings of his heart; where, secluded from every human eye, he could mourn over his past follies, in all the luxury of undisturbed reflection.

Dr. Leicester saw, with regret, how much he was the victim of erroneous feelings and sentiments. That instead of humbling himself before the God he had offended, in unaffected penitence of spirit, he was treasuring up the remembrance of his disappointments and follies; and with unavailing impatience reprobating the situation which had misled him.

When the novelty of a secluded situation has passed away, Fitsmorton's mind again sunk in listless apathy, or criminal despair. He sometimes absented himself from the family for whole days together; he felt himself a proscribed and isolated being; and there were moments, when, to relieve himself from the burthen of existence, appeared to be the only refuge from the misery which consumed him. A twelvemonth passed, and his mind was still the prey of unavailing remorse. Dr. and Mrs. Leicester were the only visitors received at the cottage. Dr.

Leicester watched in silence every movement of the unhappy Fitsmorton, and had hitherto perceived no alteration in his ideas for the better. But Dr. Leicester did not give up the case as hopeless; and in answer to one of his long argumentative letters, Fitsmorton wrote as follows.

To Dr. Leicester.

“In vain, my dear Sir, you preach resignation and hope, to such a being as I am; all is chaos and confusion within my mind. I look upon this world with despair, and on the next with doubt and anxiety. You too well know by what progressive steps I arrived at the summit of folly. Repentance and resolution might have retrieved my fortune and my peace; but where, oh where is the lenient balm which can assuage the stings of conscience, proceeding from the guilt of having deprived a fellow-creature of existence! a fellow-creature who was once my heart's bosom friend, whose

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welfare and happiness were dear to me as my own! What can I say of my unhappy sister! how wide extends the affliction of which, too truly alas, she was the primary cause; a cause which originated in timid apprehension of the austerity of a parent. But I will not reflect on the memory of one, whose uncongenial nature to the domestic habits of his family precluded the possibility of a reciprocal confidence. My poor mother! sir, you know not half her excellencies; nor what she has suffered from the delicate sensibilities of her nature being little understood, and never appreciated. To her counsels, even from my boyish days, do I attribute the little good my mind was ever blessed with; and I have now so pierced her heart, that on this side the grave the wound can never know a cure. As to my wife, the angelic being who smiles whilst her heart is rent with despair, who endeavours resolutely to combat the gloomy temper of my soul,

and would share and soothe my every woe, what shall I say of her? Alas! I know her sufferings, and though my heart swell to agony at the thought, I feel the impossibility of their abatement. Could my father now witness my degradation, and her exalted virtues; how would he reprobate those false ideas which were inimical to our union! She is now the only support of my guilty and remorseful mind; and perhaps the grand tie which prevents the cord of life from being voluntarily snapped asunder. Why am I wretched in the bosom of my family? Why do I only breathe with freedom in the wild and unfrequented paths of nature? The midnight hour of meditation is the best solace of my feelings; the solitary owl, and the last sounds of a retiring world, the best companion and music to my diseased imagination. The jarring elements are more congenial to my nature than the serenity of a summer's sky, studded with a thousand evidences of an unknown almighty power.

“How shall I drag on a wretched existence? How shall I silence the feelings of remorse? I am sometimes almost tempted to wish that my ideas of right and wrong were better suited to my situation, that I could regard with apathy the crime I have committed, and baffle the scrutiny of a misjudging world, by again mingling with its gay inhabitants. The remedy must eventually prove a successful one, or the world could not boast such various examples of the triumph of guilt over the power of conscience; and whilst the successful duellist is revelling in the smiles of prosperity, the crime of murder is only another name for bravery.

“Had I even met poor Dorville upon equal terms, there might be some extenuation of my guilt. What avails my acquittal at an earthly tribunal. No recording angel can drop the tear of commiseration, and blot out the remembrance of such an outrage to humanity. * * * * *

* * * * *

“A cry of distress obliged me to leave you yesterday, most abruptly; our few servants all appeared in confusion. I mechanically followed them into the garden, or rather preceded them. By the side of a pond, I found my Emily in the attitude of despair, just attempting to plunge into the water; I forcibly withheld her; the nursery-maid was in a fit on the grass, and from little Mary I soon learnt that her brother had fallen into the pond. All this passed instantaneously, and before any one understood the nature of the distress, I had jumped into the pond and rescued my boy. A few seconds more must have proved fatal, for he was nearly exhausted. Emily heroically exerted herself to restore the child; and when he gave signs of returning life, she threw herself into my arms, and could only say, “Heaven bless my husband, the preserver of his child!”

“The first tears I had shed for many, many months, fell from my eyes; my heart,

which had of late felt like a burning fire within my bosom, appeared softened and relieved, but of short duration was the new and pleasing emotion; a few hours restored tranquillity to my family, but the anguish of my heart returned with redoubled bitterness. The mild but expressive eye of Emily discovered what was passing in my bosom, and I flew to my usual haunts of meditation with gloomy avidity, and spent half the night in the indulgence of those reflections so distressing and so unavailing. 'Tis true I had been the means of saving the life of my child;—Nature at that moment resumed her rights, and I have since kissed the velvet lips of innocence with all a parent's love. But when I reflect that the violence of youthful passions may lead him to the paths of vice and folly, that he may become as wretched a being as his father, I am impious enough to doubt whether his life—

“——I cannot finish the sentence——

“ Adieu, my friend.

“ EDWARD FITSMORTON.”

Dr. Leicester's answer.

“Notwithstanding you say it is useless to preach resignation and hope, I shall never be weary of enforcing to you their salutary effects. In truth, my dear sir, you are like a man who having burned his hand, voluntary envelopes his whole body in the devouring flame. I am well aware how sore is the disease which afflicts your mind, and, for its permanent cure, I must continue to probe the wound with the greatest resolution. Your past conduct cannot be excused—hardly palliated. You have erred against reason, judgment, and common sense. You have outraged the laws of God and man; and what is the remedy you adopt for these crying evils? You fly to gloomy solitude; and by cherishing the selfish feelings of remorse, by unmanly

and vain regrets ; you waste those hours which a good and gracious God has vouchsafed you for the great work of repentance. Had you fallen instead of your friend, the decree would certainly have appeared more consonant to human judgment ; but, had you fallen with all the weight of unrepented sins and follies on your head, human judgment could not limit your fate at the awful tribunal of heaven ! Glance not at the dreadful idea of rushing self-devoted into the presence of your maker. Remember, Fitzmorton, that it is more frequently the refuge of cowardice, than the result of any boasted bravery of spirit ; and always doubles the crimes and offences it seeks to fly from.

“ Infatuated man ! shake off the despondency which assails you ; and let repentance lead you to the paths of peace. ‘ The midnight hour of meditation, the solitary owl, and the jarring elements,’ may suit the feelings of a romantic or im-

aginary affliction ; but when did this mockery of vain sensibility produce one emotion of genuine piety ; or call forth that sincere, but heart-rending expression of, ' God be merciful to me a sinner ! ' You contemplate the stormy heavens with a sickly and unthankful mind, or so certain an evidence of the unlimited power of God would check every presumptuous idea, and encourage the feelings of religious hope, through faith and resignation.

" Could you regard with apathy and indifference the follies you have been guilty of, could you still contribute to the idle pageantry of an hour, and stifle remorse under the mask of gaiety, I should, indeed, consider yours as a very hopeless case ; but you still would cling to virtue and rectitude ; only, you have fatally mistaken their path. Remember that sins, deep in their dye as scarlet, by repentance become whiter than snow ; and that the great

author of redemption came not in the world to destroy, but to save sinners !

“ You confess that your mother’s heart is pierced with many sorrows, and how do you endeavour to alleviate her unmerited affliction ? By estrangeing yourself from her society, by forcing her to believe that the son, on whom she once rested for comfort and protection, is for ever an alien to his family, and to all the social and domestic duties of life : by convincing her that your past conduct has been too atrocious to merit the forgiveness of heaven ; and that you are the self-devoted victim of unparalleled guilt. To your amiable wife you act with still more unpardonable cruelty. I have often watched, with a parent’s eye, the various emotions of her apprehensive mind. Fitsmorton, she loves you so truly, that much, I fear, her tender frame cannot long support such a life of care and anxiety.

“ Return then, my dear deluded friend,

to social and domestic comforts. In the plan you have adopted, you have not gained one step towards peace; try the active duties of life, and lose the remembrance of your own affliction, in adding to the comfort and happiness of others. Return to Fittsmorton Park, and let rational employments and pursuits supersede the rant of despair, and the ebullitions of transitory remorse. Tell me not that this is impossible, that your heart is impenetrable to every feeling of humanity; for I have sedulously marked how you endeavour to suppress the tenderness of your nature, and to encourage every misanthropic habit. Your having been the means of restoring your child to life, must prove a lasting source of comfort; by your own confession, the feelings of the father then prevailed over the affectation of the cynic; and but for their deliberate suppression, would have been of permanent duration.

“ Oh that I could persuade you to hum-

ble yourself before Him, in whose hands are the issues of life and death! So shall the devout confessions of the penitent christian sustain the spirit of erring humanity, and he that said, 'if you have sinned, 'sin no more,' be ever willing to balance mercy against the scale of justice. Let me entreat you to search the scriptures. You are, I fear, hitherto but cursorily acquainted with their sacred import. One great obstacle to your mixing again in society, is the fear of being led astray by the weakness of your own heart, that the spirit of gaming may be quieted, not vanquished; and it is far less criminal, you say, to give yourself up to unavailing remorse, than to brave the temptations which existing circumstances might induce you to yield to. To this I answer, scenes of dissipation and folly are best avoided; that I should have much less hope of your return to the social duties of life, were you confident of being able to meet temptation

that diffidence of yourself I gladly hail as a most favourable symptom, and that, after your dear-bought experience of the dire effects of unchecked impetuosity of feeling, and the instability of vicious pursuits, you will be led, both by habit and inclination, to the rational pursuits of man; and by abjuring vice, best evince your just detestation of it, and your repentance of having nearly proved its victim.

“ I intend soon to visit the cottage.—My prayers are yours.

“ T. LEICESTER.”

CHAP. VI.

EMILY continued to pass her days in dull monotony, or in anxious apprehension, on Fitsmorton's account. She with too much reason anticipated that his health would suffer from his being constantly exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and from the irritable state of his mind; and she dreaded every calamity which anxiety and affection could suggest. Her hopes ever rested on Dr. Leicester's expected visits: he cheered her with his counsel, and never permitted her to despair on the subject most interesting to her heart—the return of peace to her beloved husband's mind.

She was ruminating one day on the possibility of such a blessing, when her attention was aroused by an elegant carriage entering the little enclosure which sur-

rounded the cottage. In a few moments Mrs. Barclay was announced, and the *ci-devant* Miss Sandford stood before her. Emily had a confused recollection of a card having been left at the house in town just before her misfortunes, and, being unacquainted with the name of Barclay, she concluded that the card having been given to her originated in some mistake. Mrs. Barclay, with her usual volubility, commenced the history of herself—"That she had married to her carriage—that her husband was a man of great property—that somehow or other, he had taken a fancy to her—and so she was persuaded to become his wife."

Emily congratulated her on her good fortune.

"Fortune, to be sure, I have," she replied; "but poor Mr. Barclay is such a martyr to the gout, that he ought to have a nurse, not a wife, to attend him. He is, besides, thirty years older than I am, a

little deformed, and very captious in temper. We are now passing through Wales, for the pleasure of travelling; and having heard of your change of circumstances, I thought it might appear like pride not to ask you how you do."

Emily slightly bowed.

Mrs. Barclay proceeded.

"And how are your spirits, my dear creature? To be sure this is a very different place to what you have been used to. Dear me, how surprized you must have felt when Mr. Fitsmorton fought a duel! I wish you would tell me the history of yourself, for there were strange reports abroad upon your leaving town. You would have Fitsmorton when you might have been a countess. By the bye, I fancy Mrs. Grosvenon has paid dearly for her shameful conduct."

"My mother, are you speaking of? For heaven's sake tell me what you know about her!"

“ My dear soul, don't discompose your spirits; I really know nothing to a certainty; only a few months ago Mr. Barclay was ordered by his physicians to go to Bath, (he was attended by three at a time); and I saw Mrs. Grosvenor walking on one of the parades—such a figure!—so shabbily genteel! that I hurried away, lest she should know and speak to me. She had on a bonnet that formerly her own maid would not have worn; and——”

Emily interrupted her.

“ And is it possible that you did not wish to offer relief where poverty was so conspicuous? Did you never see her again?”

“ Never! Besides, one would not wish to have any intercourse with such a character as Mrs. Grosvenor's. Modest married women should be very careful how they associate with cast-off mistresses.”

Emily exclaimed—“ Oh my poor mother!”

“ I do not wonder,” Mrs. Barclay continued, “ that you should be so affected. I am sorry, however, I mentioned the subject.” Then, looking at an elegant watch which hung conspicuously by her side, she said, “ Dear me! Mr. Barclay only allowed me half an hour : indeed I pleaded hard to come to you even for so short a time ; but I told him how proud it would appear, if I did not visit a friend in distress : besides, I wished to shew you my elegant carriage, and the beautiful horses, which are just purchased — An’t they dears? — Look how sweetly they toss their heads up and down. But I forgot to ask after your children, and poor Mrs. Granby! Good bye, dear Emily; keep up your spirits; I am sorry I can’t stay longer.”

So saying, she fluttered away in all the thoughtlessness of folly ; nor did she hear Emily’s exclamation of “ Merciful Heaven! grant me patience !”

The unfeeling vulgarity of Mrs. Barclay's manners, and her ill-judged attempts at consolation, were forgotten in the idea of her mother's return to England, perhaps now in distress, or in absolute want. And she vainly formed a thousand plans for ascertaining Mrs. Grosvenor's real situation. By Fitsmorton's advice, she wrote to Dr. Leicester, who caused advertisements to be inserted in the newspapers, so cautiously worded, that only the parties themselves could comprehend their meaning. Emily most ardently wished for the opportunity and the power to relieve her mother's distresses, and perhaps to shield her from further misery. She wished to forget the neglect she herself had experienced during her infancy; and, when pressing her own children to her bosom, wondered how such a neglect could have been possible.

Dr. Leicester continued his visits and his letters to Fitsmorton; and Emily, who

watched all his emotions with unalleviating anxiety, was so frequently disappointed in the fallacious hopes, she could not sometimes help encouraging, that her husband's mind would eventually be restored to peace. She, however, had the satisfaction to know that he regarded her as the most perfect of human beings; and often would he exclaim, "My Emily! I do indeed appreciate thy worth; and though happiness and I are, I fear, now and for ever at variance, for thy dear sake I will continue to endure existence. Oh, had I early confided to thee all my doubts and perplexities, I should probably have escaped every disgraceful fascination. I should not have been the destroyer of my friend!"

Mrs. Granby was gradually recovering health of body and mind. Mrs. Fitsmorton was never prevailed upon to leave her. Alfred Granby had felt all that human nature could feel under the pressure of such a disappointment and misfortune, and hu-

manity pleaded, when the delicacy of his feelings would have condemned; and he endeavoured to hope that the affection of a wife and mother would supersede every other consideration. With returning reason, Mary seemed to exert more fortitude than her nature had hitherto evinced. Mrs. Fitsmorton's conduct, her husband's anxiety, and the sight of her lovely blooming child, were powerful incentives to conquer unavailing regrets, and to look forward to future peace. The idea only of meeting her brother, subdued her feeble spirits, and her tremulous accents ever betrayed an alarming agitation when he was mentioned. Travelling was strenuously recommended to perfect her recovery;—and, accompanied by Mrs. Fitsmorton and her husband, she soon left England, every thing being arranged for a long foreign tour. Nothing could induce her to be separated from her child; she seemed to exist but in its presence: and frequently, with

tears of gratitude, she would put the infant in her husband's arms, and term it the pledge of his forgiveness, and of her future peace.

Emily acceded to the necessity of their departure, and had received the mournful consolation of a visit from Mrs. Fitsmorton. The meeting and parting with her son, was indeed a very severe trial; nor was he less affected, though he endeavoured to conceal the agitation he experienced.

Catherine Walker ever continued a faithful and valuable servant; her care and affection for the child knew no bounds; and her gratitude to Mrs. Fitsmorton and Emily ceased but with her life.

Franks ended his days in a prison, and died unpitied and unregretted.

Emily had nearly given up in despair the hope of again returning with her husband to society. His mind continued the prey of unavailing remorse; and the sad remembrance of his lamented friend, was the

never-failing sting which lacerated his bosom.

Mr. Macartny and Miss Travers were just at this period united. Emily had one morning received the interesting intelligence; and, feeling rather more than usually composed and cheerful, she summoned the children to take with her their accustomed ramble. The fineness of the day, the beauty of the scenery, and the apparent enjoyment of the children, induced her to prolong her walk beyond its usual bounds. She soon perceived a man at a little distance, advancing towards her; fear was a stranger to her bosom, for a robbery in the environs of the village where she resided, would have been a singular, an unheard-of event. What then was her astonishment, when the man, apparently disguised, came up close to her, and seizing her rudely by the arm, presented a pistol to her breast. The children screamed in wild afright, and clinging to her gown, she

felt the danger of their situation, and the horror of her own.

"I will give you my purse, (she exclaimed,) only take away the pistol, and harm not my ~~children~~ ones."

"Sorceress, (the man answered,) it is not your purse I would have, it is your lovely self. Did I not once tell you that you should sue to me for pity?"

Emily now recognised the voice of Sir George Sinclair; she had presence of mind sufficient to recollect the derangement of his senses, and that the malady had of late alarmingly increased. Endeavouring to suppress her ~~tears~~ ^{he} sought to temporise with his violence. The wild and unfrequented path she had chosen ~~gave~~ gave little hope of chance assistance or relief. And she at length found ~~it~~ not practicable to disengage herself from his ferocious grasp, or to silence the screams of her terrified children.

Sir George Sinclair, after a sort of convulsive triumphant laugh, said :

"You have trifled with me, beauteous deceiver. You should have fled to me for refuge under your late misfortunes." And after continuing to reproach her in a wild and incoherent manner, he suddenly seized her little boy in his arms, and levelled the pistol at his head. "You will not fly me now, (he continued,) this moment repays all my sufferings. I am followed by the woman I have so long adored."

Poor Emily did indeed follow him, and desperate from the situation of her child, she endeavoured to snatch him from the madman's arms; and at the same time fortunately averted the pistol from its dreadful aim: and as she caught the screaming child to her bosom, the explosion of the pistol bereaved her of all recollection. She was first aroused by the cries and lamentations of the children.—Her senses were soon restored; and with all a mother's joy, when she perceived that they had escaped danger; but a sight soon met

her eye, which chilled her blood with horror; the wretched man had himself received the contents of the pistol, and lay apparently without sense or motion, the blood streaming from his mouth and head. She fled from the spot as hastily as possible; but carrying one child, and soothing the other, she arrived at her own cottage, breathless, and overcome with exertion and fatigue.

Most fortunately Fitsmorton was at home; Emily fainted, and was immediately conveyed to bed; proper people were sent to remove Sir George Sinclair from the spot, and much Fitsmorton apprehended various and unpleasant consequences might ensue from his death. This, however, did not prove the case; he lived, but he lived ever after a wretched maniac, and again experienced the friendly solicitude and humanity of his uncle's honest and well-meaning wife.

The fright and fatigue which Emily had experienced brought on a premature con-

finement, and she soon lay apparently on the bed of death. Fitsmorton's distraction cannot be described; he wrote an incoherent letter to his friends at the rectory; and they, with their usual prompt solicitude of friendship, arrived at the cottage, just as a few hours were to determine the life or death of Emily! He found Fitsmorton in all the agony of sorrow, gazing on the death-like appearance of the unconscious Emily. Mrs. Leicester took her station at the bed-side, the medical attendants were awaiting in fearful expectation of the awful crisis. And, at the sight of Dr. Leicester, Fitsmorton relapsed with despairing violence to a more acute sense of his affliction.

"Tell me not, (he said,) of comfort, cheat me not with the vain delusions of hope; I will not survive her loss!"

Dr. Leicester saw how vain were the attempt to reason at that moment with his

despairing friend. But he forcibly conducted him to the chamber of death, being well assured nothing could at that period agitate his apparently dying wife. Then holding him gently by the arm, he said :

“ Fitsmorton ! if any thing can check the impiety and violence of your conduct, it must be the scene before you ;—contemplate the awful situation of that angelic being ; and then say if the indecency of invective ;—if the impiety of the dreadful threats you have pronounced to a God, on whose fiat her fate still depends, can be productive of any thing but present or future misery to yourself. Recollect, infatuated man ! how you have hitherto neglected the fairest flower that ever bloomed ; how you have fled from the charm of her society to frightful and unavailing solitude, and substituted the rant of despair for real penitence of spirit. Well may such conduct now ; rise up in judgment against

you, when the blessing that was bestowed for the solace of your existence, may now be removed for ever!"

Fitsmorton groaned, and said: "Forbear!—Oh, in mercy, forbear these just reproaches."

"I have a cruel task to perform, Fitsmorton! But I would arouse your yet dormant faculties to every feeling of religious hope. I would urge you to humble yourself before him, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, to confess with humility every past offence. And if this angel be yet permitted to dwell among us, to devote your future life to every active duty, and to those pursuits consonant to the character of a man and a christian."

Fitsmorton wept like a child; the agonizing burst of tears seemed to give vent to the feelings of oppressed nature. He knelt by the side of his adored Emily, and, taking her lifeless hand, held it to his lips

in silence: his eyes turned towards Heaven, as if he wished to hold communion with his Maker. Dr. Leicester had been assured, from the physician, that some hours would yet elapse before the crisis of her fate could be determined: he therefore permitted Fitsmorton to indulge, without restraint, emotions so newly awakened; and the hallowed ejaculation bursting from his lips of "Merciful God, restore her!" gave every happy presage that the supplication of real penitence would eventually follow.

Dr. Leicester then read, in solemn and impressive accents, prayers suitable to the occasion; Fitsmorton still kneeling, with his eyes rivetted on Emily, one moment fancying she had ceased to breathe; and the next, imagining some alteration was taking place for the better. At length the predicted hour was nearly arrived for her death, or her recovery. Every eye was fixed upon her countenance—the physician

endeavouring to judge, by her pulse, whether he might suppress or encourage hope : he alone was now the object of Fitsmorton's attention ; and conjecturing, by his manner, the worst that could happen, he sat—the image of Despair.

A convulsive sigh from Emily electrified all around her. The physician motioned that they should leave the room ; and Fitsmorton imagining that the dreadful sentence was accomplished, rushed from the apartment in speechless agony, to which succeeded paroxysms of returning violence, almost shaking the seat of reason, and certainly putting to flight every emotion of hope and resignation.

Mrs. Leicester had remained in the room, and most grateful to her affectionate and anxious heart were the words, “ She lives ! Her disorder, madam, will subside.”

Emily, in a short time, verified the Doctor's predictions ; the sleep of apparent

education could advance, was judiciously and kindly offered for his serious consideration; and he soon listened with tolerable composure, when Emily sweetly intimated her hopes that he would live again in the bosom of domestic society. And now the bloom of health had irradiated her cheek with more than usual beauty, and these newly-awakened hopes of her beloved husband's restoration to peace, bid her anticipate future happiness, but for the recollection of the probable misery of her mother's fate! Of that fate, however, she continued to remain ignorant. Mrs. Grosvenor died in wretchedness and poverty, without one friendly hand to smoothe the bed of death, or to ameliorate her dreadful situation. She continued with Lord Sedley for some time, revelling in all the luxury which vice and folly could bestow; but soon their frequent altercations were productive of more serious quarrels, and he, tired of her waning charms and ex-

travagance of disposition, wrote her his last farewell, only accompanied with a bank-note of very moderate value, taxing her with certain imprudencies of conduct, as the best excuse for so sudden a desertion. It were useless to follow her through all the changes she then experienced. She at first accepted the protection of a man who had been a dependant of Lord Sedley's; but, after having arrived in England with him, she soon tired of his penurious disposition, and they amicably parted by mutual consent. Ever extravagant and unthinking in her disposition, she could little assimilate her necessities to her means: the horrors of poverty were advancing, and, after having visited the city of Bath on a speculative plan, with an equally indigent companion, she, by slow degrees, plunged into every vice that could disgrace the name of woman: habitual drunkenness took from her the power of reflection, ruined her health, and reduced her to the extreme of poverty. There were moments

when she remembered Emily with agony; and 'ere she could form the resolution to supplicate relief from her hands, she, in an hour of inebriety, met with an accident, which soon ended her miserable life.

Her remains were consigned to the grave by the parish, and Emily was for ever ignorant of the sad fate of her mother!

It has been before remarked, that Fitts-morton's character, in early life, was decisively a domestic one. Nature had implanted the seeds of virtue in his bosom; an affectionate mother had endeavoured to cultivate and improve them; and, when removed from her immediate care, he was taught every accomplishment which could constitute the scholar and the gentleman: and, had parental authority been softened by friendship and affection; had he been taught by example, as well as by precept, to worship God "in spirit and in truth;" had the volume of christianity been opened to his view; his character might have remained free from reproach: or, had the

weakness of humanity even prompted the commission of those vices and follies he now suffered from, instead of the unsatisfactory ebullitions of remorse which harassed his mind, without a prospect of relieving it, he would have felt and acknowledged that one tear of genuine repentance was more acceptable in the sight of Heaven, than all the romance of unrestricted feeling, leading to the gloomy verge of criminal despair; that no sin, however erroneous in its nature, but may be remitted, by the adoption of a new life—by embracing that faith which leads to hope, and produces the blessed fruits of unlimited charity.

Fitsmorton's habitual carelessness on sacred subjects; his deplorable ignorance of the sublime truths of christianity, were the grand obstacles which Dr. Leicester lamented in the transformation of his mind: but time and perseverance accomplished the task; and, as religion opened new sources of consolation, he felt less repug-

nance to return to the practice of every active duty; and, in a twelvemonth after Emily's recovery from the bed of death, he consented to reside at Fitsmorton Park, and, by degrees, his mind regained that serenity which his late enthusiastic feeling would for ever have forbidden.

Mrs. Fitsmorton continued abroad with her daughter; and just before their expected return, Mrs. Granby appeared alarmingly to droop, from the sudden attack of indisposition.

She never lived to meet her brother!—an idea which always gave rise to agonizing reflections. A consumptive complaint most rapidly undermined her constitution, and she died serenely, in the arms of her mother!

Mrs. Firmsmorton and Granby returned to England immediately with the child; they were sincere and lasting mourners for her death: but Time, the grand soother of all affliction, in some measure subdued the severity of their's; and Mrs. Fitsmorton,

exclusively took upon herself the charge of her grand-daughter, dividing her time between Granby and her son's family; and she lived to hold in her arms an infant of this her present darling, who was in due time, and with every prospect of happiness, united to Fitsmorton's eldest son; the will of the unfortunate Dorville being hereby, in every respect, accomplished.

Emily became the happy mother of several other children; and the scrupulous attention that was paid to their moral and religious duties was amply repaid, by their proving a blessing and an ornament to society.

Fitsmorton could never be persuaded to make any permanent residence in London, too much reminding him of former follies, whenever necessity compelled him to make even a temporary visit there: the select society with which he was surrounded; the education of his children; and, above all, the dear woman who ever remained his rational companion and affectionate coun-

sellor, so exercised his understanding, and interested his heart, that he had little leisure or inclination to seek the charm of unbounded variety in the gay region of dissipation. To his latest hour, the sad remembrance of Dorville pressed heavily on his mind; but the horrors of an accusing conscience were now softened by the devout aspirations of unaffected penitence; and the folly and depravity of his former conduct only remembered as a mournful memento of human weakness.

Dr. Leicester lived to an advanced age; and, in every visit to Fitsmorton Park, he felt proudly gratified that he had proved an instrument, in the hand of Providence, to restore Fitsmorton to the bosom of his family, and, through the medium of repentance, to that peace which neither the follies of the world, nor the delusions of a perverted imagination, could bestow!

THE END.

